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PESSIMISM

PESSIMISM

A HISTORY AND A CRITICISM

BY

JAMES SULLY, M.A., LL.D.

AUTHOR OF 'OUTLINES OF PSYCHOLOGY' ETC.

'Our philosophy, when not borrowed, is little more than the expression of our personality' *G. H. Lewes*

SECOND EDITION

WITH NEW PREFACE

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PREFACE.

In bringing out a new edition of my volume on Pessimism, I do not feel called upon to make more than one or two unimportant corrections. These consist in reducing the number of apparently independent writers on the subject. It has transpired that the author of the criticism of Hartmann's biological doctrine, referred to in the foot-note to page 204 of this volume, is no other than the versatile high-priest of the Unconscious himself, and that the Herr Taubert spoken of on pages 108 and 109 is in reality Hartmann's first wife. Perhaps an apology is due to Herr von Hartmann from one who, after making a somewhat careful study of his literary style, failed to recognise it in an anonymous work.

For the rest, I may confine myself in this Preface to a brief review of the further developments of thought about life and its value since this work appeared nearly fourteen years ago. To begin with, then, the pessimistic movement in German literature has by no means spent itself. Hartmann himself, with a prodigality of vital

force which suggests the rapture of the gods rather than the despair of mortals, has carried forward the exposition of his philosophical system to what looks like a point of exhaustive completeness. In 1879 he published an elaborate work on 'The Phenomenology of the Moral Consciousness,' in which, after a lengthy examination of the principles lying at the root of the historical systems of ethics, he sought to show how they lead up to and find their reconciliation in his own doctrine of duty, as an obligation to consciously aid in the world-process by which the absolute is to be redeemed from its unblessedness. In the following year he brought out a 'Contribution to the History and the Foundation of Pessimism,' in which he is specially concerned to detect the germ of his own eudæmonistic pessimism in the writings of Kant. In two important works published in 1882 he did for the religious consciousness what less than three years before he had done for the moral consciousness, tracing the several phases of its historical evolution, and seeking to show how its aspirations meet and attain a common fulfilment in his own doctrine of a final deliverance for the individual and for the world as a whole.

This strenuous activity of the chief living pessimist has been ably supported by that of ardent adherents to the cause. Among these I may perhaps class the somewhat rhapsodical P. Mainländer, who, after giving to the world a 'Philosophy of Redemption' in 1876, completed

his treatise ten years later by a supplementary volume of essays. The 'Philosophy of Redemption,' we are told, is a continuation of the doctrine of Kant and Schopenhauer, and a confirmation of Buddhism and pure Christianity. The negation of the individual will to live is said to be the finest fruit of all philosophical thinking, and is to be set up visibly before all men. The writer seems to outdo his master in sombre complexion of thought when he tells us that the movement of all being is not the will to live but the will to die. The final deliverance is to be reached in the sinking of the world into 'absolute nothingness.'

Respecting the other attempts to fortify the gloomy edifice of German pessimism a word or two will suffice. In 1880, Julius Bahnsen followed up his earlier works by another metaphysical treatise, in which he defended his own view of the world-process as against that of Hartmann.[1] The continued popularity of the subject has been illustrated by the appearance in 1881 of an anthology from Hartmann's voluminous writings, by Dr. Max Schneidewin, and in 1885 of a string of 'pearls,' from pessimistic literature as a whole, by Max Seiling. As another illustration of this attempt to popularise the pessimistic creed, I may allude to the interesting volume of O. Plümacher on 'Pessimism in the Past and Present' (1884). This little work not only gives a fairly complete sketch of the pessimistic movement in religious

[1] The second part of this treatise was published after Bahnsen's death in 1881.

thought, poetry, philosophy, &c., but supplies a valuable account of the various recent attacks on the doctrine from the standpoint of 'Naturalistic Optimism,' 'Ethical Optimism,' and so forth.

As a glance at Plümacher's volume tells us, pessimism has by no means been having it all its own way in Germany. There has been a manysided reaction from the dispiriting doctrine. We find that it has been attacked now on the philosophical or metaphysical, now on the ethical, and now on the theological side.

As an example of a recent metaphysical criticism of pessimism I may take Dr. Klencke's little work 'From Phantastic Pessimism to Joyous Realism' (1882). The aim of the writer is to hark back from the philosophy of Schopenhauer to that of Spinoza, with its 'seelige Aufgehen in Gott.' Another thoughtful examination of the pessimist's valuation of the world, as elaborated by Hartmann, will be found in an essay by Albert Weckesser on 'Empirical Pessimism' (1885). The point of this attack seems to be that we cannot measure the value of the world in the subjective terms of feeling alone, but must introduce a 'reason-worth' as well. The effect of such a change in our standard of value is, the essayist thinks, to conduct us to a 'cosmic optimism.'

From the side of ethics pessimism has been attacked among others by H. Sommer, in a work entitled 'Pessimism and Ethical Doctrine' (1882). According to this

writer the judgment on life's value must be referred to conscience, which is 'a category of worth' of general and necessary validity. All pessimism, by denying the testimony of conscience and religious feeling, is, accordingly, anti-ethical. Another work, bearing the same title, from the pen of Albert Bacmeister (1882), directs its criticism, among other points, to the assertion of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, that progress necessarily brings an increase of unhappiness. The writer here does good service by pointing out that the true welfare (Wohl) of the individual is furthered through the developed moral power which progress secures. Thus, for example, progress (in Germany at least) has brought the individual sacrifice entailed in military service, yet the pain involved in this is compensated by the honour attaching to arms (Waffenehre).

Of the protest of theology against modern pessimism we have a vigorous example in a volume bearing the title 'On the Latest Conclusion of Wisdom,' by Moritz Müller (1886). The writer indulges in a number of witty criticisms on the utterances of the pessimists, and seeks to show that the last conclusion of wisdom lies in a reasonable belief in immortality. As another example we may take Dr. David Asher's volume on 'The Final Outcome of Schopenhauer's Philosophy' (1885). Dr. Asher is by no means an out-and-out antagonist of Schopenhauer, and his admiration for the pessimist gives special weight to

his careful examination of his doctrine in the light of Hebrew theology, with its confident assertion of the goodness of life.

While the clash of arms has thus been heard in the land where the assailant of common-sense orthodoxy first gave challenge, it has gradually extended to other countries. The keen interest in the subject in France is attested by the appearance, in addition to Professor Ribot's study on Schopenhauer's philosophy, of a translation of Hartmann's chief work, and of an able review of the whole modern pessimist movement by E. M. Caro. Much the same may be said of Italy, Holland, and other more enlightened European countries.

In our own land and in America, where foreign intellectual growths are apt to require time for their transplantation, the interest in the great questions definitely raised by the modern pessimist has been manifestly deepened and intensified. Since the present volume first appeared each of the two *chefs d'œuvre* of modern German pessimism has been translated into English, the rendering of Schopenhauer's treatise, by Messrs. R. B. Haldane and Kemp, appearing in 1883, and that of Hartmann's treatise, by Dr. W. C. Coupland, in the following year. The demand in English-speaking countries for fuller information on the subject may be further illustrated by the translations from Schopenhauer's minor writings by Mr. T. B. Saunders, and by the careful study on pessimism by

Professor Wallace in the new edition of the 'Encyclopedia Britannica.' To this may be added the last-named gentleman's interesting 'Life of Schopenhauer,' a compliment to the philosophic Bohemian by one of that class of cathedra philosophers on which he was wont to pour his pitiless scorn, which might well make one so greedy of recognition chuckle in his Frankfort grave.

More than this, the problem of pessimism has been taken up and independently discussed among us. A treatment of the subject at once sympathetic and independent is to be found in Dr. Coupland's recent volume, 'The Gain of Life,' a work which reveals the scholarly translator of Hartmann's treatise and the trained ethical thinker. Dr. Coupland, while accepting the empirical and eudæmonistic pessimism of the Germans, essays a new path of escape from their dreary conclusions, which is curiously interesting at this moment in its affinity to old-fashioned mystic faiths.

English thought has been wont to pursue its jog-trot common-sense course, untroubled by the speculative flights of the Germans. And this tendency is illustrated in the appearance of more than one recent work dealing with the problem of happiness, in which the heart-searchings of the German pessimists are passed by with a fine display of insular indifference. Of such is Mr. W. H. Mallock's volume, 'Is Life worth Living?' (1879), which, oddly enough, confines itself to an attack on what it calls

Positivism, and writes as if Messrs. Huxley, Harrison and Company were the only men who had insisted on our looking for life's value in that conscious life itself, and as if the cruel negation of that value were not ringing in all attentive ears. The practical bent of the English intellect illustrates itself in the much more philosophic work of Miss J. H. Clapperton, 'Scientific Meliorism and the Evolution of Happiness' (1885), in which we have a powerful plea for the improvement of the human estate by combined social effort. Miss Clapperton, English-like, clings to the belief in Progress, and finds in this belief (as I myself have done) a sufficiently secure egress from the slough of pessimistic despond. Another recent publication, having more of the *naïve* optimism of the last century, before Schopenhauer and his followers filled the air with their despairing cry, is Mr. F. T. Mott's cheery little volume 'Corona' (1888), where we are assured that science and devotion raise together the song of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. A like cheerfulness of mood, untroubled by the challenge of modern pessimism, is expressed in Sir John Lubbock's two little volumes on 'The Pleasures of Life' (1887–89)—a work whose wide popularity seems to attest that a large number of English people still look on the problem of making life enjoyable as a particularly simple one.

Such works as the last-mentioned, though taking no note of modern philosophical pessimism, may perhaps be

regarded as a common-sense reaction from the mood of despair to which it gives a philosophic articulation. This reaction becomes a conscious and deliberate opposition to the pessimist's doctrine in a number of other writings. An example of this is given us in Dr. Kalisch's able and thoroughly philosophical volume, 'Path and Goal: a Discussion on the Elements of Christianity and the Conditions of Happiness' (1880). Dr. Kalisch, in the interesting form of a dialogue, here roams in a scholarly manner through ancient and modern literature, touching with special stress Buddhism, Stoicism, and German pessimism. His results are positive and constructive, an idealistic solution of the problem of life, which, if not radically original, bear the impress of the writer's fresh and striking individuality. Another philosophical criticism of pessimism, of a more technically metaphysical complexion, is the essay by Mr. T. B. Kilpatrick on 'Pessimism and the Religious Consciousness' (1883).[1] A thoroughly learned and acute examination of modern pessimism in its theological bearings is given us by Dr. Wright, in his work on 'The Book of Koheleth, commonly called Ecclesiastes' (1883). The writer traces in an interesting manner the points of agreement between the ancient Hebrew and the modern German pessimism, but at the same time insists on their radical dissimilarity. Among other criticisms

[1] In a volume entitled *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, edited by Andrew Seth and R. B. Haldane.

of pessimism by English theologians may be cited that of Dr. John Tulloch, in his volume, 'Modern Theories of Philosophy and Religion' (1884).

The above may suffice to show how far we still seem to be from having heard the last word on pessimism. And the conclusion reached by a survey of recent literature may be confirmed by a little reflection on the characteristic experience and temper of our age. It is true, no doubt, in a sense, that the fashion of Byronic despair has passed. The modern man hesitates to pour out in voluminous utterance the smarting sense of his own defeat in the life-struggle. That fascinating book, 'The Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff,' with its poor little long-drawn cry over purely personal pain, must, in spite of its freshness, its directness and force of self-revelation, appear to every thoughtful reader a moral anachronism. None the less, discontent and passionate protest are in the air, swelling, indeed, to a more voluminous and whelming wave. Human plaint is transforming itself from a thin, pitiful lament over the individual lot to a large, many-voiced denunciation of a common wrong. Such choral protest strikes the attentive ear in the great social upheavings of the time, in the fierce demands for redressive justice from the long patient 'masses,' in the loud and plangent clamour of Socialism, Nihilism, and the rest. It may be heard, too, in softened yet distinct echo in the most characteristic fiction of the day, more particularly

that of France, Russia, and Scandinavia, where the individual takes on more and more of a typical character, representing oppressive conditions of life and a destiny of foredoomed struggle, which are common social features of the age.

This seething of the minds of men in the mood of angry revolt suggests at first that the despair of terrene life is growing general, and penetrating down to the strata of society which are commonly supposed to be the last to think. Yet these social convulsions surely have another meaning. If men were so deeply convinced of the hopelessness of their state, would they not, instead of all this fierce denunciation, betake themselves to the anodyne of a dull brute-like submission to necessity? Is not the social ferment, with its decrying of abuse and wrong, a manifestation of a vital energy not yet tamed by the hopelessness of the outlook? What our newspaper discussions of the social problem, our new attempts at amelioristic legislation seem clearly to prove is that men are coming into possession of a new consciousness of power—of power to modify and transform some of those very conditions of life which, when viewed as permanent and unalterable, invested this life with much of its gloomy fatefulness.

This is not the place to discuss the practical outlook of the hour. It is easy to be cynical and to ridicule the new theories of social reorganisation. There is no doubt, I think, that we are at the point where much wild talk is

unavoidable. In their first essays at a large co-operative effort men are certain to stumble. The socialistic and other ideals of the day are far from being as clear as they might be for purposes of precise direction. Outbursts of philanthropic impulse may, from the very heedlessness of passion, only too easily hinder the object they seek to further. All the same, men are plainly in the mood to try their powers, and wise men will await the issue of the experiment. I venture to think, therefore, that the message of modern pessimism will go on receiving even more attention than it has yet done, and this not merely because, as we have seen, men are growing more alive to its vital connection with the most sacred and most tender of their convictions, but because its plaintive note condenses into strong eloquent expression that passionate sense of social wrong which is the most remarkable ingredient in the temper of our time. Believing this, and believing further that this spirit of denunciation is the beginning of new and far-reaching social aspiration and effort, I cannot but hope that the particular solution of the perplexing life-problem attempted in this volume will yet draw to itself a large accession of interest and approval.

J. S.

HAMPSTEAD: *January*, 1891.

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[1] The following list, arranged in chronological order, aims merely at giving the series of more important books which have a place in the recent pessimistic movement in European literature. In preparing this list I have been greatly aided by the learning and industry of my friend, Dr. Coupland. I would also acknowledge my indebtedness to the valuable bibliography appended by Professor Wallace to his 'Life of Schopenhauer.'

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PESSIMISM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

To most English minds, perhaps, the term pessimism suggests nothing like a philosophic creed or a speculative system. As a familiar word in popular literature it appears to signify a certain way of looking at the things of life, a temper of mind with its accompanying intellectual predisposition. In everyday language a man is a pessimist who habitually emphasises the dark and evil aspects of life, who is quick to see that its boasted possessions are marred by numerous ills, and is ever reminding us that progress brings more bane than blessing in its train. Men of this cast of mind meet us in all walks of life; as well in private society as in the conspicuous regions of literature and politics. We do not think of them as a school adopting certain first principles in common; but rather as a peculiar make of person characterised by a kind of constitutional leaning to a gloomy view of the world and its affairs.

Yet it may be assumed that a considerable number of

Englishmen are beginning to understand that pessimism also stands for a recent development of speculation which provides a complete theory of the universe, and which appears to be adopted, at least in the land of its birth, by a large and growing school. The attention which the great founder of German pessimism, Arthur Schopenhauer, now receives in his own country, thanks more especially to the labours of faithful expositors like Frauenstädt, and of partial disciples like Hartmann, has for some little time aroused a certain curiosity in England. And so it has become the fashion, among those who would pass as experts in the movements of German philosophy, to talk in a half-mysterious and esoteric manner of Schopenhauer and his system of pessimism. Quite recently, moreover, attempts have been made to unfold the leading doctrines of the pessimists to English readers. I may refer to Miss Zimmern's 'Life of Schopenhauer' (1875) and to an account of Hartmann's philosophy in the 'Westminster Review' (January 1876) as being among the first efforts in this direction. It is this modern philosophical pessimism which will more especially engage our attention in the present inquiry.

At first sight it might seem that these two kinds of pessimism, the popular and instinctive, and the philosophic and reasoned, have nothing to do with one another, and that no light can be thrown on the later by the earlier development. It is, no doubt, true that modern German pessimism as a philosophy of existence must be examined and estimated on its own grounds, and be accepted or rejected according as it shows itself to be or not to be a consistent and well-reasoned system of thought. At the same time the full significance of this speculative doctrine cannot be understood except by a reference to pre-philo

sophic pessimism. Systems of philosophy do not spring from pure isolated intellect, but are the products of concrete minds made up in part of certain emotional and moral peculiarities which mould and colour in numberless particulars their intellectual workmanship. It is at least *à priori* supposable that the philosophic pessimists partake somewhat of those habits of feeling and thought which underlie the more popular type of pessimism.

But more, it is certain that these philosophers do not rely exclusively on their speculative basis, however stable they conceive it to be, but include in their doctrine an enumeration of the facts of life. As we shall see later on, both Schopenhauer and Hartmann hold that their view of existence as an unalterable condition of evil rests on an ample empirical ground of induction. And here the pessimism of the philosopher and of the plain man appear to touch and to be no longer wholly distinguishable. For does not the latter insist with more or less distinctness on the preponderance of evil over good, of misery over enjoyment in this and that region of human life? In point of fact we shall find that the two classes, when dealing with the tangible everyday realities of our common lot, resort to much the same method of argument, and even fall into much the same style of language.

It seems clear, then, that if we wish fully to understand the new and speculative pessimism, we must study it in connection with the much older and unsystematised creed. Nor can we stop here. The meaning and origin of what I have called the instinctive form of pessimism cannot be understood apart from the antithetic mode of belief, namely, the optimism which emphasises and singles out as representative of reality only what is pleasing and cheering. In

truth speculative pessimism itself is clearly related, both in its origin and in the form of its doctrines, to a corresponding type of optimism. Hence though pessimism is to be the more special aim of our inquiry, it will be necessary to treat to some extent of its antagonist. In fact, we must not confine our attention to either of these opposing views, but must take up the underlying question of the worth of life and of the world which each of these theories seeks to answer in one particular way.

It may, perhaps, be objected that by including such various modes of belief under the terms pessimism and optimism we shall rob these of all precise meaning. These badly formed Latin words, it may be urged, connote something definite, are abbreviations of fairly exact propositions. The first employers of the term optimism, after which the correlative term pessimism is formed, distinctly understood by it the affirmation that the world is as good as it is possible for it to be. Why, then, widen the terms, so as to include loose and unexamined beliefs which are not correctly denoted by them at all?

To this objection the reply is very simple. Even if the term optimism once had a correct etymological meaning, the counter term never possessed this distinction. It is true that Schopenhauer, the founder of the speculative creed, half seriously contends that the world is as bad as it can be, consistently with its bare existence. But the essence of philosophical pessimism is something less than this, namely, the denial of happiness or the affirmation of life's inherent misery, and this doctrine is by no means clearly conveyed by the form of the word. So much as to the need of abiding by the etymology of the terms.

The full justification, however, of this extension of the terms is to be found in the fact that they have already, by a natural process, acquired the larger sense here claimed for them. The popularisation of the terms, if it serves to hide their original philosophic significance, seems to indicate clearly enough the existence of a close relation between the various shades of belief denoted by each. The popular mind has instinctively classed philosopher and poet, the speculative and the non-speculative mind in one group; and, as I have remarked, very good grounds may probably be found by the critic for upholding this classification.

I propose, therefore, to interpret the terms optimism and pessimism in their widest meaning. Any theory which distinctly attributes to the world and to human life a decided worth, representing it as something good, beautiful, or pleasant, will be included under optimism, no matter whether this doctrine be reasoned or not, and no matter what grounds may be selected for ascribing this value to the object. Similarly, pessimism will cover all doctrines, reasoned or unreasoned, which distinctly deny this value to life, and represent it as something unworthy, unsatisfying, or lamentable.

It will be found that both optimism and pessimism embrace beliefs which, though essentially alike in their psychological character, differ in their subject-matter. Thus the pessimist may condemn the world in its totality as discordant or productive of misery; or he may make human nature, under its moral or æsthetic aspect, the object of his depreciation; or, again, his pessimism may take the form of a despairing view of human effort and of man's capabilities of intellectual, moral, and social improvement. Similarly with the optimist.

The various forms of these beliefs will have to be distinguished in the following review of the subject.

It may be objected to this plan that no room is left for intermediate doctrines, for views of life which lean neither to the favourable nor to the unfavourable pole. Let it, then, be said, once for all, that I not only recognise the possibility of such beliefs, but hold that it is among these that a just and correct estimate of life is to be looked for. Of this enough will be said in the right place. In reviewing the history of optimism and pessimism, I shall seek to group all theories of life, as far as possible, according to their general tendency, as favourable or unfavourable, hopeful or despairing. At the same time reference will have to be made to doctrines which are mainly critical and negative, which are put forward as reasoned protests to some extreme form of optimism or pessimism. Such doctrines cannot, of course, in every case correctly be reckoned in the opposite group to that against which they are directed.

Our path ought now to be pretty plain. Be it remembered, then, that though modern pessimism is to be the special subject of our study, this doctrine can only be understood by help of the other forms of pessimism; and that these, again, must be studied in connection with the corresponding forms of optimism. It follows that our inquiry will most fitly begin with a historical sketch of instinctive and reasoned optimism and pessimism. When the historical relation of modern pessimism has been thus ascertained, we may proceed to unfold and to examine its leading ideas. In criticising its philosophical and scientific value I shall select one or two leading peculiarities of idea or of method as typical and representative. After having approximately measured the worth of pessimism as a system of thought, it

will be necessary for us to inquire how far the main question raised by modern pessimism, namely, the worth of human life, admits of a certain answer. Finally, an attempt will be made to trace the psychological roots both of optimism and pessimism, and by help of such an analysis, together with a consideration of certain social and personal facts, to explain the apparent vitality of German pessimism.

CHAPTER II.

UNREASONED OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM.

THE varieties of instinctive optimism and pessimism, the history of which is to be briefly reviewed in the present chapter, turn wholly on the content or subject-matter of the belief. The believing impulse is the same in all cases; only it fastens now on one object now on another. Human life presents numerous divisions and aspects, each of which may become the subject of a hopeful or a despondent view. Differences of intellectual development, too, lead to differences in the extent of object comprehended in the vision. Hence the diverse expressions of these instinctive convictions.

First of all, the unreasoning optimist or pessimist may contemplate either his own interests alone, or, again, those of some portion of mankind closely related to himself, or, finally, those of the human race as a whole. In this way there arise what may be termed the individual, particular, and universal varieties of optimism and pessimism. Thus a man may entertain a cheerful view of his own individual life, or of that of his nation; or he may still further extend his vision and include in his favourable verdict the whole of mankind.

Again, there are very unlike objects of value in human life. We may select some special department of this life, for example, that of political and social effort, and make

this the object of a happy confidence or of a gloomy despair. In this case, we become optimists and pessimists in the familiar newspaper sense. Or we may take in the whole of life and view it from different sides. Thus we may look at human nature as an object of moral and æsthetic appreciation; and either rise to a favourable flattering estimate of man's moral worth and dignity, or fall to a low condemnatory estimate. Once more we may turn our attention less to life itself than to its external conditions, to the sources of its good in nature. Thus it is possible to erect nature into something beautiful and glorious, into a kindly fostering parent; on the other hand, we may regard nature as full of imperfections, of ugliness and discordance, or as a cruel and hostile presence. Finally, the object of estimation may be life itself as made up of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain.

Let us now briefly review the history of unreasoned optimism and pessimism, as they present themselves under these various aspects.

From the point of view of what is called a healthy common sense all inquiry into the worth of human life doubtless seems unnecessary and even ridiculous. The bulk of mankind pursue their various ends as a matter of course, and never raise the question whether the result will compensate for all the toil. The child gazes out into its far-stretching future, and sees only possibilities of exciting activity and of ever-growing enjoyment. The busy man stretches forth his eager hand from day to day to seize some fresh possession, or to shape some new achievement, and in his well filled consciousness there is no room for the question, 'What is it all worth?' In this stage men are neither pessimists nor optimists. They have never felt

called on to reflect on the value of life. Yet we may speak of them as unconscious or practical optimists, inasmuch as they act as if they believed in the goodness of life.

But this unreflecting stage does not continue. There must be pauses in the busiest life, and the eager child will soon find moments when the swiftly-pursued good recedes for a moment from the grasp, and becomes an object for the contemplative vision. The simplest mode of such reflection is seen when active impulse transforms itself into peaceful anticipation, when the object of real pursuit shines afar, drawing to itself fond regard, and when the instinct of active quest becomes conscious of itself, so to speak, as the assurance of an attainable good. The world presents itself as fair and rich in treasure, and the heart rejoices in the security of permanent sources of gladness. This condition may be called the nascent stage of conscious optimism. The mind does not yet distinctly set the joy of life in sharp antithesis to its sorrow. It does not care to measure the exact range of the golden rays of its happiness. It is only conscious that the earth abounds in well-springs of delight, that beauty and love make the air about it sunny and warm.

But only a few are so fortunate as to preserve this naive trust long unbroken. The intrusion of unsuspected pain, of a sense of weariness in pursuit, of sharp blows of disappointment, soon disturbs the happy dreamer with a rude shock, and forces on him the impression of discordant evil. In this way, too, reflection is awakened, and a first vague estimate of life wrought into shape. When these dark experiences fix themselves powerfully in the imagination, we have in a nascent form likewise a conscious pessimism. That is to say, the mind looks out on the whole of life under the dark shadow which these forms of misery cast on it.

The first crude reflection on the world is here born of a harsh check to instinctive hope, not as in the other case of the mere exuberance and after-play of this hope.

These crude forms of optimism and pessimism are abundantly illustrated in daily life. When filled with a new joy, as that of a requited love, a man instinctively calls the world good and fair. On the other hand, when enfolded by the dark shadow of affliction, we are disposed to see all things awry and harshly discordant. In the pages of literature, too, these first immature manifestations of the optimist and pessimist temper are familiar appearances. How strikingly, for example, are they revealed in the alternate moods which characterise the impulsive utterances of the Psalms! Now the tone is one of jubilant praise: 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord;' 'Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad.' At other times all is despondency and gloom: 'Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow;' 'How long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?' So again the dramatic poet has frequent occasions to present these opposite tendencies of the human mind under the two unlike influences just described. With the Greek dramatists the happy *dénoûment* commonly calls forth from hero or chorus an optimistic exclamation touching the justice of the gods, and the permanent triumph of good over ill. A striking example of the corresponding effect of present adversity is found in Hamlet's reflection on the ills of life:

> For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
> The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, &c.

This, then, is the first vague expression of the opposing tendencies of the human mind towards optimism and

pessimism. But the views thus generated are the offspring of the most narrow and impulsive reflection. Growing knowledge of life speedily familiarises us all with its mixed and checkered character; and all reflection, worthy of the name, must recognise the alternate light and dark strata which make up life's structure. Yet we find that even after men have fully learnt to comprehend this twofold nature of their life, their line of reflection continues to move towards one of two opposite poles. It cannot now be an image of pure delight, or of all-embracing misery; there emerges the question of relative quantity or proportion, though at first this is not distinctly formulated. The man leaning to the pole of optimism does not say the good exceeds the evil; he simply dwells on the good, makes it prominent, and emphasises it, treating the evil as something secondary and accidental. So with the opposite type of man. Evil is conceived as the one impressive fact of existence, whereas good presents itself now only as an occasional and uninfluential element.

Here, again, we may find illustrations in poetic literature. All poets sing of trouble and of joy; yet some dwell by preference on the one, some on the other; and it is easy to mark off writers who, while recognising the double aspect of their life, habitually accentuate the one rather than the other. In our own literature Keats and Byron may, perhaps, serve as an example of this contrast.

As reflection on the world grows in extent and definiteness, the antithesis between optimism and pessimism reaches a higher stage of development. The observer's eye no longer looks on the world as existing solely for his individual self, but recognises in it a home and a destiny for his fellow men. The object to be gauged is not now the individual but

the collective experience; and, according to the bent of mind with which the estimate is formed, there emerges a new and larger form of optimism or of pessimism. Man is now conceived by one kind of observer as in the main a happy being, who meets with obstacles and sorrows, it is true, but who has about him a myriad sources of consolation and of gladness. By the opposite type of beholder, again, he is described as the child of adversity and affliction, whom pleasure only gladdens for a few brief moments, while pain is his daily portion. There is no attempt made carefully to compare the facts of human life, so as to arrive at an approximately accurate judgment. The reflection is still impulsive, undisciplined, and unscientific.

This fundamental contrast in the estimate of collective human life shows itself not only in the view of the object as a whole, but also in the estimation of certain of its departments or aspects. Among these one of the first to arrest attention, and to be made the object of a twofold appreciation, is the region of contemporary social life, with its existing ideas, manners, and institutions. At all times we may recognise two well-marked classes of observers of national affairs, namely, those who lean to a comfortable and complacent view of the existing social state, and those who are disposed to criticise it, to expose its hidden flaws, and so to produce a humbler condition of mind in themselves and in others. On the one hand are those who take a hopeful view of present society, who have abundant confidence in human nature and existing social arrangements; on the other hand are the cynical ridiculers of the empty mummeries of social life, the harsh censors of contemporary morals—very likely *laudatores temporis acti*—the earnest prophetic souls who, in the midst of a seeming prosperity,

tear the veil from growing, yet unsuspected, wounds. These two classes are a distinct illustration of the contrast between the optimistic and pessimistic temper of mind.

Yet here a distinction must be drawn: a man may emphasise an evil from a pure impulse of pessimism, or he may do so in order to call attention to some genuine good, for which he thinks a spurious good is being substituted. Asceticism practised in the midst of corrupting sensuality, as it may well have been in certain periods of the 'dark ages,' may mean not a pessimistic rejection of life's good, but a perception of its most costly ingredients. So the satirist's exaggerated disparagement of shallow streams of good savours not of pessimism if it is carried out in the interests of a higher and ideal good. Even Mr. Carlyle, who has perhaps most of the pessimistic tone among contemporary English writers, never fails to erect some worthy and satisfying reality behind the heaps of shams which he so ruthlessly scatters to the winds, though it must be confessed that this verity is not always distinctly conceived, or, at least, not always luminously presented.

These observations suggest an important mark which helps to distinguish certain forms of optimism and pessimism. Both the optimist and the pessimist may have their ideal conceptions of what is perfect, beautiful, or satisfying. The difference between the two lies in their mode of looking at this ideal. The optimist believes in his conception as a possibility and a certainty; hence the present reality, though unsatisfactory, is not viewed with despondency. The pessimist, on the contrary, uses his ideal purely as a conception for bringing into clearer light the worthlessness of the existing reality. With the practical optimist what is is temporary and alterable; with the pessimist it is final and

unchangeable. This distinction must be borne in mind by and by in classifying the upholders of reasoned optimism and pessimism.

Other and larger, though still circumscribed, fields for the play of these opposing tendencies are human progress or advancing civilisation, and the constitution of the physical world regarded as man's dwelling-place. Yet the optimism and pessimism which come to light in the discussion of these aspects of existence have commonly connected themselves with some religious or philosophical idea, and will therefore be better considered later on when we have to deal with the more reasoned forms of these hostile opinions. We will therefore pass now to the illustration of the contrast as it manifests itself in relation to human life as a whole.

In the literature of all times we find these antithetic views of the human lot. On the optimistic side falls the frequent praise of earth and sky as man's beauteous home, the abundant honour paid to man as the lord of creation, endowed with powers which lift him far above the lower animals. As a temper or dominant attitude of mind rather than a definite belief, it shows itself in the poetic elevation of all social relations—the home, the ties of family, the bonds of native country—and in the sublimation and transformation of the sadder aspects of our common lot, such as the certain separation of hearts effected by death. Among the poets who have most distinctly set forth the happy and consolatory features of our collective life must be reckoned the Christian writers of our own literature. Of these it may be sufficient to name Wordsworth, who, with his sense of the vanity of much of worldly good, and his tender feeling for the sorrows of mankind, rises instinctively to a peaceful and hopeful view of things. To Wordsworth human

suffering is dear; one might almost say it was in his mind bound up with the deepest happiness:

> If Life were slumber on a bed of down,
> Toil unimposed, vicissitude unknown,
> Sad were our lot.

In reflection and sympathetic communion with nature, Wordsworth found a life which, unlike that of feverish ambition, filled and satisfied his spirit:

> Wings have we,—and as far as we can go
> We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
> Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
> Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
> Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
> Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
> Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
> Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

The opposite phase of instinctive belief respecting the worth of our human lot requires a fuller illustration in this place, since it forms the natural basis of that modern pessimism which is to occupy our attention by and by. This depressing view of mankind and the world, like that of the subject's individual life, is not confined to one age or race. It meets us at all periods of the world's history, and forms an ingredient in every developed literature.

One cannot do better than begin with that ancient literature which is most familiar to us all—the sacred books of the Hebrews. Although the prevailing temper of the writers of the Old Testament is decidedly optimistic, the world in general, and the Jewish nationality in particular, being regarded as under the eye and guardianship of a wise and benevolent Deity, yet strains of pessimistic complaint are here and there heard with a striking distinctness, as in the

Book of Ecclesiastes. 'Vanity of vanities,' we here read, 'all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?' and again, 'I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit.' 'For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts . . . as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath.'

Let us now turn to Greek literature. The Greeks, in the period of their national bloom and maturity, were, on the whole, disposed to take a cheerful view of mankind as enriched by nature and befriended by the gods. Yet the most doleful complaints of human life are met with in all periods, and with a striking frequency.[1]

Hesiod, for example, writes in one place, 'The land and the sea are full of evils; by day and by night there wander unbidden maladies bearing evils to mortals.'[2] Even the sunny-browed Homer falls now and again into a pessimistic vein, as when he writes:

For there is nothing whatever more wretched (*οἰζυρώτερον*) than man,
Of all things, as many as breathe and move o'er the earth.[3]

When we turn to the lyric and tragic poets we find frequent expressions of a similar tone of sentiment. In the elegies of Theognis, for example, the final conclusion of modern pessimism is expressed with almost a startling definiteness: 'It would be best for the children of the earth

[1] Dupont, in his 'Homeri Gnomologica,' says, *à propos* of a remark of Homer, to be quoted presently: 'Mirè enim luxuriant veteres in depingendis vitæ humanæ miseriis et calamitatibus, adeo ut infinitus essem si congerere velim et accumulare omnia illa epitheta et elogia quæ ab autoribus præsertim Græcis tribuuntur *δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι*.'

[2] *πλείη μὲν γὰρ γαῖα κακῶν κ.τ.λ.*—*Opera et Dies*, v. 101 *seq.*

[3] 'Iliad,' xvii. 446, 447.

not to be born . . . next best for them, when born, to pass the gates of Hades as soon as possible.'[1] The same reflection is made by Sophocles in the well-known passage of the 'Œdipus Coloneus,' 'Not to be born is the most reasonable, but having seen the light the next best is to go thither whence one came as soon as possible.'[2] Much the same thought is involved in the observation of Menander, 'The gods take to themselves early in life the one they love.'[3] To turn to a later period, we meet, in a distich of Palladas, with a most affecting complaint of the human lot: 'O race of men, much weeping, strengthless, pitiable, swept away down the earth and destroyed.'[4] Other reflections of a similar pessimistic colouring refer to the evanescent character of happiness, and to the fugitive aspect of human life. Of these it may suffice to quote the heart-stirring words of Cassandra in the 'Agamemnon' of Æschylus: 'Alas, for the condition of mortals! when prosperous a shadow may overturn them (or—according to Paley—'they are to be likened to a shadow or sketch'); if, however, they be in adversity, a moistened sponge blots out the picture.'[5]

[1] *πάντων μὲν μὴ φῦναι ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἄριστον κ.τ.λ.*, vv. 425–428.

[2] *μὴ φῦναι τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ κ.τ.λ.*, 1225 *seq.*

[3] *ὃν οἱ θεοὶ φιλοῦσιν ἀποθνήσκει νέος.*

[4] *ὦ γένος ἀνθρώπων πολυδάκρυτον, ἀσθενὲς, οἰκτρὸν,*
συρόμενον κατὰ γῆς, καὶ διαλυόμενον.

[5] 'Agamemnon,' 1300 *seq.* Other examples may be found in Euripides:

'Happiness is not enduring, but lasts but for a day'
(*ὁ δ' ὄλβος οὐ βέβαιος, ἀλλ' ἐφήμερος*);

and in Homer:

'As is the generation of leaves, so is that of men'
(*οἵη δὴ φύλλων γενεὴ τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν*).

Compare the proverb, 'Man is a bubble' (*πομφόλυξ ὁ ἄνθρωπος*); also the frequent likening of human life to a shadow (*σκιά, σκιᾶς ὄναρ, καπνοῦ σκιά*, etc.).

In Roman literature this pessimistic view of human life becomes still more distinct and dominant. Just as in Greece, in the full flower of her national greatness, the ruling tone was optimistic, so in the period of Roman decadence and dissolution the opposite mood prevails. Although this tone of mind frequently clothed itself in a quasi-philosophical dress, it was none the less a deeply-rooted sentiment of the age underlying all philosophy. It may be traced in the writings of poet and of philosopher, and it is discoverable among the vestiges of popular ideas and sentiments which are still preserved. Of the relation of this temper of mind to certain philosophical ideas, I shall have to speak again presently; here it is enough to illustrate it in its instinctive and unelaborated expressions. It is not necessary to quote the numerous laments of Roman writers respecting the social evils of their time. The '*O tempora, O mores!*' of Cicero represents a widely prevalent despondency in view of the gathering ills of a declining polity. Even the *carpe diem* teaching of Horace, though wearing a thin disguise of Epicurean philosophy, has a deep-lying tinge of pessimism. It rests on the conviction that life is something shadowy and evanescent, that '*dum loquimur fugerit invida ætas,*' and that all high and far-reaching endeavour is futile and foolish.

This same despondent vein, seeking to hide itself under a veil of cynical mirth, affected others besides the literary classes. Of this we have evidence in some of the tomb

The deep sense of life's sorrow which underlies this instinctive pessimism, expressed itself in a touching and picturesque manner in the customs of the Thracians at birth and death. According to Herodotus (v. 4), these singular people greeted the new-born child with lamentations, enumerating the evils he would have to meet, while the dead were buried with rejoicing and games.

inscriptions of the time handed down to us. Take, for example, the following, 'I was nothing, I am nothing, and thou who livest, eat, drink, sport, come! . . . Comrade, who readest this, rejoice in thy life; for after death there is no play, nor laughter, nor any kind of joy . . . what I have eaten and drunk, I have taken with me; all else I have left behind.'[1] Who does not feel the tone of bitter despair with regard to all worthy ends of life that vainly attempts to disguise itself under this forced and ill-timed display of mirth?

How profoundly the pessimistic tone entered into the spirit of the time may be seen, too, in the writings of philosophers, even of those whose principles leaned rather, as we shall see later on, to an optimistic conception of the world. Nowhere can one find more gloomy pictures of life than in the writings of some of the Stoics, and these descriptions have all the characteristics of that impulsive and unreasoned form of pessimism which we are now considering. Seneca, for example, in his consolations to Marcia, praises death as 'the best invention of Nature.' After scanning some of the most prominent afflictions of life, he writes: 'What need to lament the particulars? The whole of life is lamentable. New misfortunes will crowd in upon thee before thou hast paid thy debt to the old ones.'[2] In a less bitter tone, Marcus Aurelius, not content with depicting the evanescence of all human affairs, and the nothingness of all human aims, with a view to render the spirit calm and indifferent in the midst of the world's turmoil, holds up

[1] Quoted by Herr Huber in his interesting brochure entitled 'Der Pessimismus.' I am indebted to this work for many of my historical illustrations of pessimism.

[2] 'Ad Marciam,' ch. x.

death as a positive good. The only motive which could attach us to life, and keep us here, is the happiness of being surrounded with men of the same sentiments as our own. But at the present hour the anxiety which the profound discordance in the social life occasions in a reflective mind leads one to exclaim: 'O death, delay not thy coming.'[1] Among other writers of this period I may name Pliny the Elder, who, in the seventh book of his 'Historia Naturalis,' gives vent to the most depressing convictions of the pessimist. 'Would we,' he writes, 'form a just conclusion, and come to a decision, casting aside all the allurements and illusions of fortune, then we are bound to say that no mortal is happy;' for 'if there is nothing else, at all events there is the fear lest fortune should fail at last.' With a touch of grim irony which reminds one of Schopenhauer, he enlarges on all the disadvantages which the human race suffers in comparison with the lower animals. 'By none is life held on a tenure more frail; none are more influenced by unbridled desires for all things; none are sensible of fears more bewildering; none are impelled by a rage more frantic and violent.'

An illustration of a pessimism which contemns life as evanescent, and, like Horace's practical philosophy, leads to the pursuit of present enjoyment, is to be found in the Persian astronomer poet, Omar Khayyám. In the following passage we have a fine poetic expression of intellectual despair in view of the mystery of man's origin and ultimate destiny:

> With them[2] the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
> And with my own hand wrought to make it grow;
> And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
> 'I came like Water, and like Wind I go'

[1] Book IX. sec. iii.

[2] Doctor and Saint.

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing,
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.[1]

In modern literature these complaints of life's emptiness and instability thicken and grow still more bitter. In spite of the optimistic influences which belong to Christianity we find individual writers entertaining the gloomiest conceptions of existence. Much of this complaint takes the shape of antagonism to some optimistic idea put forth in the name of theology or of philosophy, and will have to be spoken of in the next chapter. Here it will be enough to give a few illustrations of its unreasoned expressions.

As a striking example of this purely personal and untheoretic pessimism, I may refer to the letters of Diderot to his lover, Sophie Voland. At the time the writer penned these letters he was passing through a curious mental experience, the outcome of which was an utterly joyless view of life. 'To be,' he says, 'amid pain and weeping: the plaything of uncertainty, of error, of want, of sickness, of wickedness, and of passions—every step from the moment when we learn to lisp to the time of departure when our voice falters; to live among rogues and charlatans of every kind; to pass away between one who feels our pulse, and another who terrifies us; not to know whence we come, why we are come, whither we go; this is called the most important gift of our parents and of nature—life.'

The name of Voltaire will more appropriately fall among the reasoned manifestations of optimism and pessimism.

[1] 'Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, the Astronomer-Poet of Persia,' rendered into English verse (Bernard Quaritch, 1872), vv. xxviii. and xxix.

Just a reference must be made in this place to those writers of the last century, who, less from reasoned conviction than from temperament and instinctive impulse, recoiled from the dominant theological optimism of the time. As an illustration of this temper of mind I might select Mandeville, who is a striking example of the lighter cynical variety of the pessimism which fastens on human nature as its special object. But since Mandeville's cynicism is, in appearance at least, a reasoned belief, it will be best spoken of in the next chapter. Very different is the deep, bitter misanthropy of another opponent of the dominant optimism, namely, Jonathan Swift. This optimism, resting on an assumption that human reason is adequate to solve the problem of existence, roused Swift's deepest abhorrence. To quote from Mr. Leslie Stephen's admirable history of the period: 'Swift says, with unrivalled intensity, that the natural man is not, as theorists would maintain, a reasonable and virtuous animal; but for the most part a knave and a fool.'[1] Hardly would it be possible, one supposes, to express contempt for mankind in language more caustic than is to be found in Jove's address in the *Day of Judgment*, beginning:

> Offending race of human kind,
> By nature, learning, reason, blind;
> You, who through frailty stept aside,
> And you who never fell—from pride, &c., &c.

We must now pass to a later department of literature, namely, recent poetry. Here we light on numerous expressions of an all-absorbing sense of life's sorrow. More particularly the writers who lived at the beginning of this

[1] 'History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,' vol. ii. p. 371.

century habitually fall into this key. In our own literature it appears as a quiet, yet pervading influence in the writings of Shelley, who, though he clung to a remote spiritual ideal of life, tends now and again to sink to a hopeless view of things. His thoughts on religion, as expounded in *Queen Mab*, have the deep bitterness of the pessimistic temper, and this is not much relieved by the intrusion of an image of 'a spirit of nature,' 'an all-sufficing Power' called 'Necessity,' which regards all that the wide world contains as its 'passive instruments,' whose joy or pain its nature cannot feel, because it has not human sense. The strains of pessimism are heard with unmistakeable clearness, too, in such poems as *Misery* and *Mutability*. Hardly could the pessimist's sad message be conveyed in more impressive language than in the lines:

> The flower that smiles to-day
> To-morrow dies;
> All that we wish to stay
> Tempts, and then flies:
> What is this world's delight?
> Lightning that mocks the night,
> Brief even as bright.

In Byron the vein of pessimism has a yet darker hue, being but little relieved by that irrepressible aspiration towards a worshipful ideal of beauty and a spirit of order in the world which shows itself in Shelley. The pessimist's conclusion utters itself without any reservation in the well-known lines:

> Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
> Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
> And know, whatever thou hast been,
> 'Tis something better not to be.

In bitter protest against the conditions of life he writes in another place:

Our life is a false nature: 'tis not in
The harmony of things,—this hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of sin,
This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree,
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies, which rain their plagues on men like dew—
Disease, death, bondage,—all the woes we see,
And worse, the woes we see not—which throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

In German poetry this spirit is best represented by Heinrich Heine and Nikolaus Lenau. Through the works of each there sighs, so to speak, a breath of intense melancholy. Heine is known as the singer of the world-pain (*Weltschmerz*), the intense sadness which arises on viewing the fleeting and unsatisfying nature of all earthly good. Although there is to be seen in his poetry a fountain of ideal hope, the outflow of this is constantly crossed and checked by the turbid torrent of doubt and despair. Hence the fantastic and contradictory character of his writings, the Mephistophelian satisfaction in building up only to pull down again as illusory and unsubstantial. Commonly Heine represents the simpler form of pessimism in which the individual life, namely, that of a sensitive poetic nature, is shown to be discord and anguish, yet in some places he extends his view to human life in general. A striking instance of this triumphant contempt of life in the aggregate is given us in the following lines:

Ich schaue durch die steinern harten Rinden
Der Menschenhäuser und der Menschenherzen,
Und schau' in beiden Lug und Trug und Elend.
Auf den Gesichtern les' ich die Gedanken
Viel schlimmer. In der Jungfrau Schamerröthen
Seh' ich geheime Lust begehrlich zittern,
Auf dem begeistert stolzen Jünglingshaupt

Seh' ich die lachend bunte Schellenkappe;
Und Fratzenbilder nur und sieche Schatten
Seh' ich auf dieser Erde, und ich weiss nicht,
Ist sie ein Tollhaus oder Krankenhaus.

Lenau's poetry is pervaded with a similar air of despondency. Very powerfully is this mood expressed in the poem entitled *Die Zweifler.*

Vergänglichkeit! wie rauschen deine Wellen
Dahin durchs Lebenslabyrinth so laut!
In deine Wirbel flüchten alle Quellen,
Kein Damm, kein Schutz sich dir entgegenbaut!
. . . . Doch stehn an deinem Ufer frohe Thoren,
In ihren Traum 'Unsterblichkeit' verloren.
Am Ufer?—nein! es ist von deinem Bronnen
Tiefinnerst jede Kreatur durchronnen:
Es braust in meines Herzens wildem Tact,
Vergänglichkeit, dein lauter Katarakt!

As a last illustration of this pessimistic movement in modern poetry, one may name the writings of Count Giacomo Leopardi. In this poet despair of life, both of the individual pursuit of happiness and of social endeavour, seems to rise to its highest pitch, uttering itself in piercing cries. One of the most striking examples of Leopardi's mood may be found in the lines headed '*A se stesso*' ('*To himself*').

. . . . Posa per sempre. Assai
Palpitasti. Non val cosa nessuna
I moti tuoi, ne di sospiri è degna
La terra. Amaro e noia
La vita, altro mai nulla: e fango è il mondo.
T'acqueta omai. Dispera
L'ultima volta. Al gener nostro il fato
Non donò che il morire. Omai disprezza
Te, la natura, il brutto
Poter che, ascoso, a commun damno impera,
E l'infinita vanità del tutto.

(Rest for ever (heart) enough
Hast thou throbbed. Nothing is worth
Thy agitations, nor of sighs is worthy
The earth. Bitterness and vexation
Is life, never aught besides, and mire the world.
Quiet thyself henceforth. Despair
For the last time. To our race fate
Has given but death. Henceforth despise
Thyself, nature, the foul
Power which, hidden, rules to the common bane,
And the infinite vanity of the whole.)

In a letter to Giordani this poet tells us that he finds a positive gratification in his pessimism: 'I rejoice to discover more and more the misery of men and things, to touch them with the hand, and to be seized with a cold shudder as I search through the unblessed and terrible secret of life.'[1] Elsewhere he writes, 'All around passes away, one thing only is certain, that pain persists;' and in another place he repeats the dreary conclusion of antiquity:

Mai non veder la luce
Era, credo, il miglior.[2]

French poetical literature, too, is not wanting in pessimistic complaints of a like character. As an example, I may quote A. de Lamartine, who, while seeking to find an anodyne for life's pain in Christian resignation, here and there breaks out into the bitterest lamentations. In his Seventh Meditation, *Le Désespoir*, he writes:

Quel crime avons-nous fait pour mériter de naître?
L'insensible néant t'a-t-il demandé l'être,
Ou l'a-t-il accepté?

[1] Epistolario I. pp. 352, 353.

[2] For an interesting account of Leopardi's life and writings, see the sketch prefixed to 'Giacomo Leopardi's Dichtungen,' deutsch von Gustav Brandes: Hanover, 1869.

Sommes-nous, ô hasard! l'œuvre de tes caprices?
Ou plutôt, Dieu cruel, fallait-il nos supplices
Pour ta félicité?

As a last example of what I have called the impulsive form of pessimism, I shall quote the *Nachtwachen* ('night-watches') of Schelling, which, though the production of one of the most abstruse of metaphysicians, is only faintly tinged with philosophic principles, being essentially the immediate utterance of that widely diffused pessimistic impulse which we are now considering. This work, published under the pseudonym Bonaventura, belongs to a critical date in Schelling's intellectual and moral development. It shows the philosopher under a temporary cloud of universal doubt and despair. It gives us a singularly powerful picture of human life as seen through the pessimist's blackened medium. In a series of fantastic images which look like the product of a disordered brain, the writer makes to pass before our eyes a number of typical scenes of human life, accompanying his panorama with the bitterest sarcasms on man and the world. Here the life of mankind is presented as a tragi-comedy, which is not worth the representation, in which the most important parts are assigned to the feeblest actors. We are all said to be masked non-entities. Since everybody, if he would show his ego *in puris naturalibus*, would run away from his nothingness and uselessness, he bedecks himself with the rags of a stage costume, and holds the masks of joy and love before his face in order to give himself an interesting appearance. And so the ego looks down at last on his tattered robes, and imagines that they make his real self. 'The death's head never fails behind the ogling mask, and life is only the cap and bells which the non-entity has donned just to make a jingle and afterwards to tear it

to pieces and cast it away' (p. 148, *seq.*). It may be added that Mr. Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* is quite cheerful and flattering when judged by this merciless exposure of human nothingness. At the close of the work, the writer represents himself as standing at the grave, and, with a grim irony which seems to have taken its key from the moody observations of Hamlet, reflecting on the nothingness of all that passes within the brain: 'What is this palace which encloses within itself a whole world and a heaven: this fairy castle in which miracles of love, with enchantments, work their jugglery; this microcosm, in which all that is great and glorious, all that is horrible and terrible, lies in germ side by side, which bore temples, gods, inquisitions, and devils; this tail-piece of creation—the human head? The home of a worm! Oh, what is the world if that which conceived it is nothing and all within only transient fancy! . . . . What are the fancies of the earth, spring and flowers, if the breath of fancy passes away in this little globe, if here in the internal pantheon all deities fall from their pedestals, and worms and corruption enter?' (p. 290, *seq.*).

CHAPTER III.

REASONED OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM.

In the developments of optimism and pessimism reviewed in the last chapter, there is to be found the minimum of exact observation and rational calculation. The conclusion that the world, in spite of its myriad evils, is fair and good, or that it is smitten to its core with foul disease, presents itself for the most part as a certain and immediate conviction or intuition. Hence I have called this form of the opposing views the impulsive. There is, indeed, in nearly all cases something like an appeal to facts, and in some instances even the semblance of an inductive process. But a moment's reflection shows us that there is nothing truly scientific in these operations. Only a few facts, having one complexion, and fitted to excite the imagination in one particular way, are grouped together without any attempt at exact observation, or at a careful balancing of opposing considerations.

Pessimism, however, as well as its opposite, does not always thus stand out in its nakedness as a product of unguided impulse. It seeks to take a scientific or philosophical shape as well, and to give itself the aspect of a reasoned and verified truth. There are two main characteristics which mark off this form of the contrast from that just dealt with. In the first place the problem assumes greater definiteness. The conflicting elements of life, good and evil,

joy and sorrow, are both recognised, alike by those who incline to a favourable solution and by those who accept an unfavourable one. Not that the question is always distinctly viewed as one of a preponderance of one quantity over another. Exact calculation does not enter into all the reasoned varieties of optimism and pessimism. Still the superiority of one factor is always explicitly or implicitly asserted, even when no attempt is made at exact measurement. Thus, for example, I call that doctrine a reasoned optimism which emphasises an ideal of life that is regarded not only as possible but also as depending on conditions which lie mainly, if not exclusively, within man's own control. The question need not arise whether in the region of present reality happiness exceeds misery; the optimism consists often in the elevation and accentuation of a satisfying ideal, and its definiteness lies in the assertion that this ideal is fitted to become real, and so to give the ruling character to life. So, again, there is a degree of definiteness in that form of optimistic doctrine, which while admitting the evil of present existence makes it evanescent by bringing it under the conception of a perfect state hereafter, whether one of prolonged individual life or one of reabsorption into the central fountain of being.

In the second place the optimism and pessimism now to be considered invariably assume the shape of reasoned truths. These beliefs no longer present themselves in the impulsive ejaculatory form, but wear the aspect of calm and studied affirmations. It may, no doubt, be a little difficult to say exactly where the unreasoned form passes into the reasoned, since even an ejaculation may seize and embody some faint rudiment of rational inference. Yet the two orders are sufficiently marked off in the main, and the doc-

trines now to be considered will include only such as distinctly put forth facts or arguments in support of their affirmations.

And now let us glance for a moment or two at the varieties of this reasoned optimism and pessimism. In the first place these beliefs, like their unreasoned prototypes, differ as to their subject-matter or content. And, first of all, we shall expect to find differences in the extent of interests included. Although individual optimism, together with its correlative, hardly finds a place among the reasoned doctrines, there is ample room for other differences. Thus optimism may wear the aspect of a national creed, as with the Jews. So, again, the reasoned forms may embrace mankind alone, or all sentient creatures known to exist. At the same time, there is no very important difference involved in this distinction. It seems to be generally allowed that human sensibilities and interests so far transcend those of the lower animals as to be the determining factor in our estimate of conscious life; or, at least, that there is such a close agreement in the general conditions of human and sub-human life that our estimate of the former, which alone can be certain, may be taken as representative of the whole.

Again, the reasoned forms of optimism and pessimism will be found to include doctrines which deal with distinct aspects of life and objects of value. For example, writers have held quite opposite views respecting the worth of human nature and its attributes, regarded as an object for our ethical or æsthetic appreciation. As illustrations of this contrast I may point to the doctrines of human corruption and innate human goodness. Again, we shall find that human activity in some of its various aspects has formed the subject of these opposing judgments. Whether it be the

capabilities of the individual man with respect to the discovery of truth, or his powers of moral self-improvement, or finally the forces which collective humanity possesses for the gradual elevation of its physical and moral condition, quite opposing views will be seen to assert themselves. Once more we shall have to observe the play of these antagonistic tendencies of thought in relation to the value of external nature and the order of the world's events, looked at as extending beyond and as conditioning human activity. Thus nature has been praised from the teleological point of view as a well-adapted environment for mankind and his sentient companions, or extolled as the exhibition of a harmonious plan of which this conscious life is but a part. On the other hand, it has been condemned as faulty and ill-contrived, as discordant and purposeless. So again, the successive order of the world's events, including the sequences of human life and of history, has been magnified on the one side as the progressive manifestation of a worthy idea, or under a slightly different aspect as the vindication of a moral order; while on the other side the cosmic movement has been regarded as blindly following a wrong and lamentable course, and as wholly indifferent to the claims of right and justice. Finally, the object of value which thus divides human opinion into sharply conflicting judgments may be conscious life itself, including both its inherent possibilities and its external conditions. It is this form of the dispute which modern pessimism puts in the forefront; and the supreme interest attaching to it justifies our giving it our principal attention in this inquiry.

In the second place the reasoned varieties of optimism and pessimism differ according to the mode of argument employed. Speaking generally, there are three methods of

proof employed. First of all comes the empirical proof, which consists in the employment of induction and calculation in relation to the observed facts of life. Secondly, there is the scientific proof, which reasons from truths of human nature, such as the constitution of the will and the conditions of happiness, &c. Finally, we have the transcendental proof, which sets out from some theological or metaphysical idea, and by means of it seeks to establish *à priori* the value of life.

In the case of reasoned optimism we have to notice a further difference of method. Thus far we have spoken only of the present known human life as the thing to be estimated. If this is shown to be on the whole good, the optimist has made out a moderate case for himself. On the other hand, if this life is recognised as deeply tainted with evil, a pessimistic conclusion would seem to follow. But the optimist has certain modes of escape from this conclusion. Allowing the doubtful, if not the certainly evil, character of the total life as observable by us, he may still seek to prove the predominance of good over evil.

There are two well-marked modes of achieving this result. First of all, he may admit the reality of evil, but render it an evanescent quantity by bringing it under some large ideal conception of things. Thus, for example, the evil of our earthly life may be conceived as subordinate to another and transformed existence after death, or again the reality of the evil of this world may be allowed, but its magnitude obliterated by conceiving our earth as a mere speck in the universe which as a whole is harmonious and happy. Or, finally, the present suffering of humanity may be regarded as a temporary phase in the evolution of conscious beings. This doctrine coincides pretty nearly with that of human progress.

It is to be remarked that this idea of human improvement frequently takes the vaguer shape of the affirmation of an *ideal* life, individual and social, which is regarded as possible and realisable. It will be found that writers who are disposed to be pessimists in relation to obvious facts frequently fall back on such an ideal conception. For example, ethical writers who are ready to take a very humble estimate of the average moral condition of mankind as it actually presents itself now, find a solvent for this depressing view of things in the idea of a moral regeneration and elevation which clearly lies within human reach.

In the second place, the evil which is admitted as at least a considerable element in the present world is spirited away, so to speak, by means of some metaphysical notion. What seems to us now to be evil—for example, pain—is only evil in appearance. In reality it is a part of the right and good ordering of affairs. The illustrations of this method of disposing of the problem of evil form a curious chapter in the history of optimism.

We may, perhaps, call the mode of optimistic reasoning which confines itself to the accessible facts of life the method of direct observation; that which seeks to merge evil in a larger good, the method of ideal substitution, and that which reduces evil to an illusory appearance, the method of transcendental resolution.

There might, logically speaking, be similar methods of pessimistic reasoning. A pessimist might, for example, concede the apparent good of the world, but resolve this into a transient or illusory element. But in point of fact, pessimism has been content to state the issue on the visible complexion of things. It has cared only to show that the existing known world is bad. At the same time it has

attempted to account for this empirically discovered evil by means of certain ontological conceptions.

Before commencing the historical review of the systems, I would remind the reader that our retrospect, while it will be specially concerned with such theories as clearly incline to an approval or a condemnation of existence, will occasionally embrace doctrines which are largely critical and neutral in their character. More particularly we shall have to notice objections urged against some of the more extravagant forms of optimism.

In order fully to follow out the history of the various forms of these opposing doctrines, it would be necessary to touch on the whole course of thought, theological and philosophical; for there is hardly a development of this thought which does not bear on one of the antagonistic beliefs. To do this here is plainly impossible, and we must be content with tracing a few of the most prominent features of this history.

If we go back to the earliest existing literatures we find traces both of optimism and of pessimism, as partly religious, partly metaphysical doctrines. All theories of divine beings may, indeed, be said to have an optimistic bearing in so far as these beings are conceived as accessible to man and susceptible of being influenced by his prayers. Yet the conception of gods delighting in evil, and of a nature to awaken terror, seems rather to be connected with those impulses which give rise to the cruder forms of pessimism. On the other hand, the doctrine that the world is the work of a wise and just Being obviously leads up to an optimistic solution of the question.

The theology of the Old Testament may be regarded as supplying first of all a universal optimism in relation to the

moral order, namely, in the doctrine that good must finally prevail over evil; secondly, a particular, circumscribed, and national optimism, with respect to the Hedonistic value of life, that is to say, in the idea that the Creator is controlling all things for the special happiness of his favourite people. It must be confessed that this optimism is hardly as brilliant as that of the later Christian theology. For mankind at large the outlook was dismal enough. It does not follow from this that all Old Testament writers should be optimists. The fact, already noted, that they frequently fall into a pessimistic strain simply shows that individuals are not always under the influence of their avowed theological creed.

If in the theology of the Semitic race we have an *à priori* basis for a limited optimism, in the metaphysico-religious ideas of the Aryans of India we find a remarkable groundwork for pessimism. 'The sense that life is a dream or a burden,' says Professor Max Müller, 'is a notion which the Buddha shares with every Hindu philosopher.'[1] In orthodox Brahmanism, as in Buddhism, a keen sense of human misery forms the starting-point. Yet the solution of the dark mystery is widely different in the two cases. According to the Brahmanic philosophy, though the created world is a regrettable accident, its effects can be neutralised. And this is effected by the absorption of the human soul in the Universal Spirit or Brahma, the true source of being, thought, and happiness.[2] Thus a mode of a permanent and satisfying existence is secured, and an optimistic *Weltanschauung* finally substituted for a pessimistic.

[1] 'Chips from a German Workshop,' vol. i. p. 226.

[2] Kapila, the reputed founder of the Sânkhya system of Brahmanic philosophy, regarded the universe as the product of two principles, an absolute spirit and nature, the product being a reflection of nature thrown on the mirror of the absolute spirit.

In Buddhism, on the contrary, as Mr. Max Müller has well pointed out, the pessimistic view of life receives no such happy solution; and this philosophy is to be regarded as pessimism pure and simple, and as the direct progenitor of the modern German systems. Buddha (or his followers) denies the existence not only of a Creator but of an Absolute Being. There is no reality anywhere, neither in the past nor in the future. 'True wisdom consists in a perception of the nothingness of all things, and in a desire to become nothing, to be blown out, to enter into Nirvâna,' that is to say, extinction.[1] The perfect attainment of this condition would be reached only at death. Yet even during life a partial anticipation of it might be secured, namely, in a condition of mind freed from all desire and feeling.[2]

If we turn to Greek thought, we find, on the whole, ideas conducive to optimism rather than pessimism. The polytheism of the Greeks was, on the whole, bright and sustaining, leading to the assurance of friendly protection, and of just dealing. The idea of an all-embracing principle of fate (μοῖρα), by which the gods, as well as men, were bound, may seem to be a purely pessimistic element in the accepted theology, since all limitation of will is a diminution of the good which the will can reach. This dark view is often said to be contained in Greek tragedy. Thus Schlegel defines the prevailing idea of this tragedy as the sense of an

[1] The contrast between the utter pessimism of this doctrine and the hopeful solution of Brahmanism, is well illustrated in Kapila's answer to the Buddhist's recommendation of annihilation. See Max Müller, *op. cit.* pp. 231, 232.

[2] For an interesting account of the nature of this ascetic ideal on its moral side, and of its relation to actual extinction, see a paper by Mr. T. W. Rhys Davids on 'The Buddhist Doctrine of Nirvâna', in the 'Contemporary Review' of January 1877.

oppressive destiny, a fate against which the will of man blindly and vainly dashes. Yet, as Mr. J. A. Symonds has pointed out, the ruling notion of Greek tragedy is 'not fate but Nemesis . . . a profound sense of the Divine government of the world . . . a mysterious and almost Jewish ideal of offended Holiness.'[1] So far as the limitation of action—human and divine—is due to the supremacy of a principle of justice, this clearly tells for optimism, on the supposition that the ends of justice are a good.

Before we pass from the more popular currents of Greek thought to its speculative movements, allusion must be made to one idea of the classic world which is distinctly stamped with the mark of pessimism. I refer to the belief in human degeneration, in a gradual decline of mankind from a pristine state of bliss, the golden age, through successive stages, such as the silver, the brass, and the iron age. The idea of a primitive state of happiness is not confined to classic mythologies, but appears distinctly enough in the creeds of Oriental peoples, as, for example, under the shape of the garden of Eden in the Old Testament. The contrast between this idea of decline and the modern idea of progress is a remarkable one, and serves very materially to lessen the balance of pessimism which would otherwise mark off modern thought from that of antiquity. It is plain that though the ideal of a golden age may supply an imaginative satisfaction to human aspirations, the projection of this ideal into the remote past amounts to a renunciation of the reality. It may be a question how far this idea really coloured the habitual sentiments of the classic

[1] 'Studies of the Greek Poets' (first series), pp. 190, 191. The idea of a just distribution of good and evil according to desert, is frankly expressed at the close of the 'Ion' of Euripides.

world. Its deep optimistic instincts asserted themselves in the belief that the golden age would some day return, and this fact seems to show that the idea of human deterioration though logically making for a pessimistic tone of mind, did not exert all the depressing influence of which it was capable.

If we pass to the more speculative thought of the Greeks, we find that in its earliest stages it offers ideas having more or less of an optimistic or pessimistic tendency. The question of the certitude of knowledge, which agitated some of the earliest thinkers, as Xenophanes, Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Anaxagoras, has its optimistic and pessimistic side. There is a profound sense of the vanity of human inquiry in the lines attributed to Xenophanes,

> Surely never hath been, nor ever shall be a mortal
> Knowing both well the gods and the All, whose nature we treat of;
> For when by chance he at times may utter the true and the perfect,
> He wists not unconscious; for error is spread over all things.[1]

And this conviction must, one supposes, have given a gloomy tinge to the view of life in the minds of these thinkers. At the same time, they did not lapse into absolute scepticism, but held that in some way, by a difficult process, truth was attainable. This consolatory element in their

[1] Lewes, 'History of Philosophy.' Cf. the exquisitely pathetic lines of Empedocles:

> 'Swift-fated and conscious, how brief is life's pleasureless portion!
> Like the wind-driven smoke, they are carried backwards and forwards,
> Each trusting to nought, save what his experience vouches,
> On all sides distracted; yet wishing to find out the whole truth,
> In vain,' &c.

teaching was strengthened by a general recognition of order and harmony in the universe which is ascribed now to a ruling principle of intelligence (νοῦς), as by Anaxagoras, now to a reconciliation of conflicting impulses, as by Heraclitus, and now to a beneficent formative principle—love—as by Empedocles, and in this way a final optimistic solution was in a sense attained.

Turning now to the classic period of Greek philosophy, we see that the question of optimism and pessimism is directly affected by the elevation of ethical subjects to the leading place in discussion. In the first place this concentration of thought on human nature was due to a despondent abandonment of the search after absolute knowledge. This despair, which reached its height in the sceptics, was, as I have observed, in itself pessimistic. Yet, in so far as it led to this new diversion of thought, it raised afresh the question whether life, as a whole, is really a good. For knowledge is but one part of the desirable, and even if this is never attainable in its purity, the practical aims of life, guided by relative knowledge (opinion), may supply a reasonable satisfaction to the wise man. In the second place, Socrates and his followers, by turning their attention to man's own inner nature, prepared the way for a more exact form of the contrast between optimism and pessimism. To know precisely in what the highest good consists was a necessary preliminary to the inquiry whether good is attainable, and happiness something more than a dream; and henceforth we shall find both optimism and pessimism profiting by these psychological inquiries.

All the leading ethicists, as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, together with the rival schools of Cyrenaics and Cynics, Epicureans and Stoics, seem tacitly to have presupposed that

good in some shape lies within man's reach. At least, they all resolve the *summum bonum* into something compassable by human volition and effort. Theoretically, therefore, they alike lean to a moderate type of optimism; and in any case they implicitly meet one aspect of pessimism by pointing out what they conceive to be the real sources of happiness as distinguished from the illusory ones, and by exposing to view the causes of human misery which lie in their own breasts.[1]

One may even go further and maintain that in the main Greek moralists encouraged a cheerful and hopeful view of life by emphasizing the certain attainability of the good they severally set up for human pursuit. This may be seen by comparing the teaching of the Stoics and of Epicurus. The former by placing the ideal end in a life of virtue gave to man a proud sense of superiority to external circumstance. They encouraged him to think that good is secured to him through his own internal resources, and that accordingly all men are equally well off with respect to the conditions of true happiness. On the other hand, Epicurus is no less concerned to bring his ideal of a pleasurable life within easy reach of the average man. This is clearly recognisable in the importance attached to the mere absence of pain as a prime condition of happiness; in the stress laid on the reduction of all unnecessary desires; in the elevation

[1] This ethical corrective to pessimism may be met with in more popular Greek writers, as in the lines of Pindar:

> Ἀεὶ τᾶν ποσὶν ὄντα παρατρεχόμεθα μάταιοι
> κεῖνο ποθοῦντες ὅπερ μακρὸν ἄπωθεν ἔφυ.

Cf. the well-known lines of Goethe:

> 'Willst du immer weiter schweifen
> Sieh das Gute liegt so nah.'

of the mental pleasures (including those of memory) above the bodily; and finally, in the emphatic ascription of life's chief miseries to illusory and exaggerated hopes.

Yet though on the whole Greek moral teaching thus presented a cheering and stimulating view of life and its possibilities, it must be admitted that the asceticism common both to the Cynics and to the Stoics proved to be incompatible with a cheerful and friendly view of life; and, as we have seen, the Stoics were wont to indulge in the most dreary tones of pessimistic complaint. The belief in an ideal of happiness into which none of the simple daily pleasures were allowed to enter was found to be too difficult to be consistently maintained, and the practical result was a despair of happiness in any shape.

Again, while the ethical doctrines of Socrates and Plato make in the main for optimism, these teachers are wont to broach ideas of a clearly pessimistic cast. Of these I would single out the doctrine that pleasure—at least, in most cases—presupposes a state of pain.[1] This supposition, as we shall see by and by, is taken up and made exceedingly prominent in the modern systems of pessimism.

The optimism which we thus find predominant in Greek ethics reappears in the cosmological and theological ideas of the same thinkers. In Plato especially, who was an optimist to the core, these features are very strongly marked. They are discoverable in his conception of God and of his relation to the Ideas; in his view of evil as confined to the phenomenal world and as arising from the imperfection of

[1] In the 'Philebus' the intensest sensations of pleasure are said to be thus conditioned; in the "Republic" it is the philosopher's intellectual pleasure alone which is bound to no conditioning pain (see Zeller's 'Plato and the Older Academy,' p. 186 *seq.*).

the world as a copy of the Ideas; in his theory that the creation of the world was effected by Intelligence persuading necessity to be fashioned according to excellence[1]; and in his notion of a future and perfect state for the soul. It may be said, indeed, that these ideas constitute a system of optimism which has hardly been surpassed even by the most favourable interpretations of Christian theology.

In Aristotle, who is far less imaginative and poetical than his predecessor, the optimistic traits are less warm and brilliant: still they are distinctly present. We find, for example, plainly set forth the idea that the world is the work of intelligence acting on matter. So, too, there meet us the notion of purpose in the world,[2] and the view of terrestrial objects as an ascending series of living beings in which matter is more and more dominated by form. It is to be added that with Aristotle the soul, or at least the rational part of it, is conceived to be immortal.[3]

Finally, in the theology of the Stoics we find a no less distinct theoretical basis of optimism. The supreme government of the world is in the hands of a good and wise God. According to Epictetus, God is even the father of men. The mystery of the existence of evil on this theory is distinctly

[1] Plato distinctly tells us that the Creator (demiurgus) was free from envy (a quality commonly ascribed to the gods), and, being good, willed that the world should become as like to himself as possible (*πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα ἐβουλήθη γενέσθαι παραπλήσια ἑαυτῷ*, 'Timæus,' p. 29 E).

[2] *ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἡ φύσις οὐδὲν μάτην ποιοῦσιν*, 'De Cælo,' i. 4. The action of the spontaneous and accidental, *τὸ αὐτόματον* (of which *ἡ τύχη* is a species), plays too subordinate a part to affect the general character of Aristotle's *Weltanschauung*.

[3] Strictly speaking it is only the *νοῦς ποιητικός* as distinguished from the *νοῦς παθητικός* which possesses substantial and eternal existence. This idea is vaguely defined, and as Ueberweg points out, there is ample room for the more naturalistic and pantheistic, and the more spiritualistic and theistic interpretation which were afterwards given of it.

recognised and dealt with. Thus it is argued that God is the author of all things except wickedness, and that the very nature of good supposes its contrast evil, and that after all what we call evil may not be evil. True life is to be sought in a merging of self in the universal order, which is a perfect harmony. Although the Stoics are a little undecided as to the immortality of the soul in its individual state, they at least teach that it will persist as absorbed in the Divine essence—an idea which, I have observed, is fitted to give a final attribute of worth and completeness to human existence.

In the later developments of Greek philosophy in Alexandria, there meets us a more distinct trace of a pessimistic view of the world. The several inquiries into the certitude of human belief had ended in scepticism. Moreover, in many of the best Greek minds, happiness had become so bound up with the exercise of the intellect in the contemplation of truth, that this sceptical abandonment of the search after absolute truth naturally tended to a pessimistic view of existence. This mode of thought reaches definite expression in the doctrines of the Neo-Platonic and the Neo-Pythagorean Schools. According to this mystical teaching truth is wholly unattainable by reason. It can only be very faintly intuited in the extraordinary and momentary states of spiritual rapture or ecstasy in which the individual soul loses its personality and becomes absorbed in the Infinite Spirit. Happiness cannot be realised in this present life; only faint glimpses of it are enjoyed in the brief moments of ecstasy. It will, however, be fully reached after death, when the soul will 'quit this frail and pitiable individuality to be absorbed in the being of the Infinite.'[1] To die is thus

[1] G. H. Lewes.

no loss, but pure gain. It is the beginning of true life; and the dying Plotinus is said to have answered friendly inquiries by exclaiming 'I am struggling to liberate the divinity within me.'

Here, then, we have, as in Indian philosophy, distinct asceticism, or, to use Mr. Lewes's words, 'a moral suicide,' as the outcome of speculative dogma. In relation to the present life this doctrine is thoroughly pessimistic. It pronounces earthly good to be an illusion, and counsels men to a renunciation of all pursuit of present happiness. Yet when measured by the modern form of pessimism, it will be seen to contain an optimistic element as well. It not only saves men from absolute despair, but it rouses them to an intense passion of hope by its doctrine of a future union with the Divine. Tragic though it be on a first view, it leads up to a final pacification. If less joyous than the optimism which embraces the present life, it stands out as a final triumph of glad faith against the pessimism which denies the possibility of happiness both now and hereafter.

Passing by the Roman philosophy, which is little more than a repetition of Greek ideas, we come to Christian theology. Here we may observe some of the same features that met us in the Alexandrian mysticism, by which, indeed, this theology was so profoundly influenced. To the Christian the world is evil and full of misery, and our present life a wandering in a strange country. Nothing attainable here can yield the human spirit true satisfaction. Real and perfect bliss is postponed to a future state. So far the view of the world seems to be pessimistic. Yet Christianity avoids the asceticism of India and of Alexandria. It does so by the doctrine that evil is not a permanent and indestructible ingredient of existence. Evil did not arise, as in the

teaching of Plato, through a limitation of divine power: it is the result of man's own act and can be eliminated by a voluntary return of the race to its Creator. The earth and all that it contains are under the protection of the heavenly Father, and the good and the evil alike are the recipients of his bounty. Christians are not to leave the world, but to serve God in the midst of it. To the child of God the present life is thus bereft of its desolateness, as well by the assurance of paternal care and love, as by the consciousness of spiritual union with Him, and by the elevating hope of perfect bliss by and by. More than this, a value is given to our earthly existence, by the representation of it as a necessary preparatory discipline for the future life. Finally, there is the promise that all mankind will gradually be converted to God and the world be recovered for its rightful King; and a further value is given to the Christian's present life by the idea that he is able to contribute to the agencies which are to bring about this result. In this teaching the pessimistic element becomes softened and veiled through the superposition of a larger and predominant optimism. The evil of the present life, as narrowly conceived, disappears in the good which is seen to be guaranteed on a larger view of the world.

In the writings of the Fathers we have a defence of the dogmas of Christianity against Judaism on the one side and paganism on the other. The form of the questions discussed was frequently supplied by Greek philosophy, and this remark applies to the reasonings respecting the origin of evil. To the Christian mind, all evil presented itself as sin, since sin was its one primal source. Here we see faintly shadowed forth a theory of the origin of the world's misery. The apologists were strongly disposed to maintain an optimistic

view of the world by ascribing its creation to a perfectly good Being. They supposed that they were effecting this result by attributing all evil to sin, and by regarding sin as the outcome of free choice in beings left in a sense independent of their Creator. This is the earliest and theological form of the dogma of free-will.

Justin Martyr contends for this view of free-will when arguing against the fate of the Stoics. He sees plainly that if everything be derived from fate, then fate, which, to the Christian means God, must have originated evil. So Tertullian argues that in giving liberty and choice to his creatures the Creator freed himself from responsibility as to the consequent existence of evil. Origen, again, taught, in opposition to Plato, that material existence is not the cause of evil. The material world and sin alike owe their origin to the voluntary falling away from holiness of the spirits who were first among all created things. According to the degree of guilt of these spirits is the region of existence assigned to them, and some of them appear as souls in human bodies. An element of optimistic reconciliation is guaranteed in the doctrine that all the spirits are to be finally reclaimed, and even the arch-enemy to be so far destroyed as to cease to be the foe of God.

In the writings of Augustine we have the same view of the origin of evil, combined with a peculiar theory respecting its nature. The cause of wickedness, he tells us, is the will. All the misery of existence flows from an evil use of free-will in Adam, in whom freedom meant *posse non peccare*. But the wicked will itself is not caused, it has no *causa efficiens* but only a *causa deficiens*. It is an error to suppose, as the Manichæans do, that evil is an original principle co-ordinate with good. Wickedness is no substance like

goodness, but a mere defect of goodness (*privatio boni, amissio boni*). Nay more, evil subserves the good and contributes to the embellishment of the whole. God has adorned the path of the development of the ages as though it were a sublime song by means of antithesis (antiphony), and heightened the beauty of the world through the contraposition of conflicting things.[1]

It is noteworthy, too, that, Augustine distinctly meets the doctrine of Oriental and modern pessimism that non-existence is better than existence. 'It is quite absurd to say "I would rather not exist than be unhappy," for he who says "I will this, rather than that," chooses something. Non-existence, however, is no something, but nothing, and it is impossible to choose rationally when the object to be chosen is nothing.' This argument would, it is plain, equally prove that it is impossible to wish for relief from a present pain.

While the doctrine of free-will was thus used to save the theory of a perfectly good God and to give an optimistic hue to the final view of the world, the opposite dogma of a control of created wills by God, and of predestination, asserted itself with more and more distinctness. This dogma was clearly necessitated by the hypothesis of an omniscient and omnipotent Creator of the Universe, and it found for itself good grounds both in the Old and in the New Testament. This supposition appears plainly enough to tell against the goodness of God, unless the fact of evil be denied, or it be supposed that God's power is limited so that He could not bring about a preponderant good except on the condition of a subordinate amount of evil. The recognition of predestination had thus a direct tendency to

[1] 'Contrariorum oppositione sæculi pulchritudo componitur' ('De Civ. Dei,' xi. 18).

tone down the bright optimism of the upholders of free-will. Yet many subtle attempts were made to minimise the gloomy effect of this dogma. Augustine labours hard to reconcile predestination with his theory of sin as the result of abused free-will. Among the school-men, Thomas Aquinas displays an intellectual ingenuity which would be admirable if only subordinated to a pure regard for truth, in suggesting considerations which may serve to harmonise predestination with the Divine goodness. Perhaps, he tells us, eternal happiness and eternal misery differ only as unlike degrees of good. And, again, it is possible that the whole number of the damned is an exceedingly small fraction of that of the saved. In such ways did writers try to ward off the pessimistic consequences of their accepted dogmas. It was not till Calvin had expounded the idea of predestination completely and consistently that its dreary character appeared in all its nakedness. That the Deity should knowingly and voluntarily condemn myriads of his creatures to endless misery, for no other reason than that He so willed, must be admitted to be a sufficiently oppressive conception of the world.

It is to be added that while the opposing doctrines of free-will and necessity thus told for and against a theological optimism, in their later and non-theological forms they became identified more or less distinctly with a hopeful and a despairing view of human effort. Whether this identification be logically justifiable or not, I do not here inquire. Yet it is obvious that, on a superficial view of the subject, the idea of a perfectly undetermined will is a more agreeable and flattering idea than that of a pre-determined will.

Among the perplexing subtleties with which the school-men sought to justify theological dogmas, those of Duns

Scotus deserve a passing notice here. This writer emphasises the perfect freedom of the Divine will. God is not determined to do any one thing rather than another: He might just as well have not created man, as have done so. He is not limited by the idea of good, since that is good and the best which He chooses, and is so solely because He chooses. If He had prescribed murder or any other now recognised crime, it would no longer have been a crime or sin. This attempt to get rid of the reality of existing evil by means of a transcendental fiction is hardly suited to bring much consolation, not to speak of gladness, to the heart. If we are not to judge what is really good and ill by the criterion of common human susceptibilities, but to accept all that is as best, just because a perfectly unfettered Being willed it, theoretic optimism ceases to have any practical significance.

Passing on to the revival of free speculation, we have to notice in Giordani Bruno the foundation of that pantheism which grew into a complete system in the hands of Spinoza. To Bruno the universe presents itself as the very opposite of an arbitrary creation. It is the manifestation of the Divine intelligence, which is infinite, and which is immanent in the infinite universe, constituting its sustaining activity. The infinite All contains an infinite number of worlds, each of which is perfect in its kind, and the totality of which manifests the highest conceivable perfection. According to this view nothing is truly evil, a thing only appears so in relation to some other thing, and what is evil to one is good to another. The more man rises to an intuition of the whole, the more the notion of evil disappears. Least of all is death an evil. Here we have a subdued theoretic optimism closely resembling that of the Stoics. The mystery of evil is solved by ascribing it to an illusion.

The individual has no business to judge the world from the narrow stand-point of his own experiences and feelings.

This same method of disposing of the existence of evil in the world meets us again in the pantheistic philosophy of Spinoza. Only this thinker is more consistent and rejects every estimate of the world, whether as good or as evil. All such attempts to measure the worth of the world arise, he thinks, from our emotional nature, that is to say, from our experiences of pleasure and pain. 'Nothing, when regarded according to its nature is to be named perfect or imperfect; especially after we have recognised that all which happens does so according to an eternal order and certain laws of nature.' The infinite mind which is immanent in the universe must not be judged according to the finite; and Spinoza ridicules all attempts to explain events by final causes. God, the immanent principle of all things, is infinite perfection, and in the contemplation of Him (*Dei intellectualis amor*) both virtue and happiness are realised.

While the optimism of Christian theology was thus being undermined by new conceptions of the Deity and his relation to the universe, it had to withstand attacks from another quarter. Critical writers felt the huge obstacles which the facts of the world interpose between the mind and the consolatory belief in a perfectly wise, powerful, and good God; and the pessimistic protest against the misery of existence took now the more intellectual form of a contradiction of the propositions of Christian theology.

Among these sceptical reasoners Pierre Bayle occupies a prominent place. He opened that dispute between the sceptical ridiculers of the current theology and its apologists which has not yet quite ceased. Bayle wrote professedly in the interests of faith, setting out with the distinction

between reason and faith, to which optimistic theology was gradually feeling itself driven. Yet his exposition of the absurdities of theology, including the contradictions between its optimism and the facts of life, constituted a powerful attack on the orthodox belief.

The defence of optimistic theology was undertaken by Leibnitz, who, in his 'Theodicée,' set himself to prove that the existing world is the best possible. In Leibnitz optimism reached its philosophic culmination. Nowhere else do we find it so explicitly defined; nowhere so closely connected with the whole philosophic system. Leibnitz professedly directs his argument against Bayle, contending that faith is in harmony with reason. God's existence can be distinctly proved. Similarly the presence of evil can be accounted for. God's absolute will and goodness are limited by His wisdom, and this determination is that which we call His justice. In virtue of this, God can will only that which His wisdom recognises as best. His volitions are thus not arbitrary, but have a moral as distinguished from a physical necessity. The necessity compelled Him to select from among all possible worlds which His wisdom represents to Him that one which is most perfect, because it contains the greatest amount of reality, and so is the most happy. This happiness belongs to the whole world, and not simply to man. Both the kingdoms of nature and of grace constitute graduated scales of perfection, and stand in perfect harmony with one another. The course of nature is so ordained that it shall always bring to pass that which is most consonant with the spirit.

The presence of evil is thus explained by Leibnitz. Physical evil (pain) and moral evil (wickedness) are reduced to what the writer calls metaphysical evil, namely, limitation. That the elements of the world are limited and finite lies in

their own nature, and not in the will of the Deity. That anything should exist depends, no doubt, on the will of God; and the question arises why He did not leave evil and wickedness in the realm of possibility. He has caused the world to exist in order that a greater perfection and happiness of the whole might be realised. He is not like a foolish general who sacrifices a province in order to spare a few lives, but rather resembles an artist who makes use of unpleasant shadows and dissonances of colour in order to accentuate the splendour of colour and harmony of the whole work. Wickedness is thus tolerated as a *conditio sine quâ non* in a world which but for it would not possess magnanimity, and a host of other virtues. Thus, if we contemplate the world as a whole, we shall rise, not simply to a state of resignation (as Spinoza seems to speak of), but to one of expanding joy.

Leibnitz gave the keynote for a jubilant strain of rational optimism to succeeding German thinkers. Wolff adopted the argument of the 'Theodicée.' Its influence may be traced, too, in Lessing's philosophic speculations, more particularly in the optimistic view of human development put forth in the 'Erziehung des menschlichen Geschlechts.'

In our own literature, too, the eighteenth century is marked by the culmination of theological optimism, and its vigorous self-defence in the face of the assaults of a growing scepticism. The prevailing tone of this period was, as Mr. Leslie Stephen's able review[1] clearly shows, decidedly optimistic. The arguments employed by the Christian theologians and their antagonists, the Deists, alike rested on optimistic presuppositions. As Mr. Leslie Stephen points out, Churchman and Deist agree as to the reasonableness

[1] 'History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,' vol. i.

(apart from revelation) of the two cardinal elements of optimism in Christian theology, namely, the existence of a wise and benevolent Creator, and of a future state. It is to be observed further that the Deists, for example, Toland and Tindal, by giving greater dignity to the unassisted human reason, and still more by relieving human nature of the stigma implied in the dogma of natural corruption, contributed new elements to the optimism of the orthodox creed. Yet, though the general view of the world and of human destiny adopted by theological writers was thus a complacent one, there are not wanting occasional manifestations of the pessimistic direction of thought. Even a Churchman like Butler, as Mr. Stephen remarks, is profoundly affected by the gloomy aspects of the world; and one theologian, Wollaston, is said by the same authority 'to colour this world as darkly as possible, in order that the prospects of a future life may stand out against it as brightly as possible.' Wollaston agrees with the modern pessimist in thinking that the most favoured of mortals would scarcely be willing to lead their lives over again, and affirms that 'if the souls of men are mortal, the case of brutes is much preferable to that of men.'

The writer whose mission it was for once and all time cruelly to lay bare the logical weaknesses of this theological optimism was David Hume. In his 'Dialogues on Natural Religion' he plays sad havoc with both the *à priori* and the *à posteriori* method as applied to the question of the Divine existence. But Hume's contribution to the dispute must be spoken of later on.

Outside the limits of the theological disputes of the time we find ample illustrations of the dominant optimism. The most striking embodiment of this vein of thought is certainly

Shaftesbury. He tells us, in 'An Inquiry concerning Virtue' and in 'The Moralists,' that the world is a harmonious whole; that nothing is really ill, since it is right in relation to the universal scheme. He admits that much looks wrong; but this arises from the observer's confining his vision within too narrow limits. He follows Leibnitz in regarding the apparent contradictions of the universe as the essential basis of its beauty. 'The world's beauty is founded on contrarieties.' Out of 'the various and disagreeing principles' of subordinate mutually-opposing creatures 'a universal concord is established.' Shaftesbury is vague enough as to what he means by the universal concord. It seems to have as little reference to human or other sensibilities as Plato's cosmic harmony. At most it appears to constitute a pleasing spectacle for an æsthetic mind.[1]

Shaftesbury gave the key to other writers of the time; and in Bolingbroke, and still more distinctly in Pope, we see the agreeable ideas of this elegant philosopher set forth with an unsuspecting assurance which is almost touching. It is unnecessary to quote extensively from Pope's 'Essay on Man' in illustration of the writer's indebtedness to Shaftesbury. The latter's view of the universe is clearly enough expressed in the well-known concluding lines of the poem:—

> All nature is but art unknown to thee;
> All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
> All discord, harmony not understood;
> All partial evil, universal good:
> And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, *whatever is, is right.*

[1] Mr. Leslie Stephen has some able strictures on Shaftesbury's easy and complacent conceptions of the universe.

The one element of difference which separates Pope from his master is that he seems to be much more distinctly aware of the existence of what men mean by evil, and that he catches some tones of the cry of doubting, staggering humanity in presence of the dark mystery.

A very distinct vein of optimism runs through most of the writings of the English moralists of this period. Their systems may be said, indeed, to involve as their principal assumption an ethical optimism, namely, the idea of the natural superiority and advantages of right and virtue over wrong and vice. By Shaftesbury and his followers morality was looked on as something at once divine and natural. To Shaftesbury there is no need of the sanctions of a future state. Virtue is a part of the existing harmony of the world, and may be left to take care of itself. In place of the dogma of human corruption, he set up the idea of a natural tendency to virtue under the name of the moral sense. He argues elaborately that happiness coincides with the exercise of the 'natural kindly or generous affections,' and that the Supreme Wisdom 'has made it to be according to the private interest and good of everyone to work towards the general good.' This coincidence of happiness with virtue, to be realized by help of a natural instinct, is emphatically asserted, too, in the writings of Shaftesbury's follower, Hutcheson.

Passing by Butler, whose doctrine of conscience was intended to supply, in a more modest form, that principle of harmony and Divine arrangement, which he was unable, with Shaftesbury, to see in the universe about him, we come to a slightly different form of ethical optimism in the works of some of the later moralists, more especially the Utilitarians. These writers, by identifying moral good with pleasurable

feeling, naturally had human happiness in their eye when estimating the value of the world; and they were, as a rule, very confident as to the actual realisation of their ideal.

Hartley, for example, goes so far as to declare that 'all individuals are actually and always infinitely happy'—a proposition which, as Mr. Leslie Stephen remarks, 'sounds like optimism run mad.' This same writer has a curious quasi-scientific way of proving the predominance of pleasure above pain by help of his favourite principle of association. The tendency of this law, he thinks, is to convert a composite state of pleasure and pain, in which one of the ingredients is inferior to the other, into a pure state consisting of the predominant element, and equal in intensity to the difference between the two original factors. Now pleasures greatly transcend pains in number (though pains, in general, are greater than pleasures). Hence the resulting state will be generally one of pleasure alone; and thus, ultimately, association has 'a tendency to reduce the state of those who have eaten of the tree of good and evil back again to a paradisaical one.'[1]

Some writers of this group even go so far as to quantify the preponderance of happiness over misery. Thus Adam Smith—who resolved happiness into tranquillity and enjoyment, and held that the latter follows almost, of necessity, from the former—concludes that there are twenty people happy for one in misery. His conception of happiness is, as might be supposed, sufficiently modest: 'What,' he asks, 'can be added to the happiness of a man who is in health, who is out of debt, and has a clear conscience?' Smith approves of the Stoical idea as to the general equality of men's condition with respect to happiness, and thinks that

[1] 'Observations on Man,' part ii. prop. 4; cf. part i. prop. 14.

this result is greatly favoured by our power of accommodating ourselves to permanent situations.[1]

Still more curious, perhaps, are the reasonings of the Utilitarian, Abraham Tucker, respecting the balance of happiness in the world. He argues that since God gives everything, He must give an equal share to everybody, and that accordingly 'the value of everyone's existence, computed throughout the whole extent of his being,' must be precisely the same.[2] This is another attempt to justify by argument the familiar popular idea, that we are all, on the whole, equally well off, how greatly soever appearances are against this supposition. By help of certain fanciful hypotheses, Tucker arrives at the conclusion that our whole amount of suffering may be equivalent to a 'minute of pain once in every twenty-two years.' As with Hartley so with Tucker, our selfish impulses manage to transform themselves into benevolence through the principle of association. Thus ethical optimism, which in the writings of Shaftesbury and his school grounded itself on a natural disposition of the mind, bases itself in the reasonings of the associationists on a scarcely less 'natural' arrangement, which is supposed to reside in the laws of mental development as a whole.

As a striking solitary representative of the pessimistic direction among the moralists of this thoroughly optimistic

[1] Smith's qualifications for exact observation may be tested by a single quotation: 'Except the frivolous pleasures of vanity and superiority, we may find, in the most humble station, where there is only personal liberty, every other which the most exalted can afford.'—'Theory of Moral Sentiments,' part iii. ch. iii.

[2] Tucker does, indeed, make a lame attempt to prove a certain equality even in this life. Thus, like Smith, he lays emphasis on the effect of habit and custom in 'bringing us to a liking of the way of life we have long continued in.' But he is, of course, compelled to call in a future state as necessary to making the equality complete ('Light of Nature,' ch. xxvii.).

period, I may name Mandeville. This writer expounds a sufficiently distasteful form of ethical pessimism, that is to say, the doctrine of the radical and essential baseness of human nature. He seems, by nature and temperament, to have been eminently adapted to play the part of a cynical castigator of his species. He argues—in the most paradoxical manner, it is true—that all human impulses are, at bottom, selfish, and interested, and that there is no such thing as virtue even in the most excellent. Virtue is but selfishness behind a mask. Mandeville differs but little from most other cynical contemners of human nature. His reasoning is of the flimsiest. Still it wears the semblance of argument, and for this reason, as well as because of his close connection with the ethical optimism of Shaftesbury, I have thought it well to rank his views among the reasoned forms of pessimism.

The complacent views touching man's happiness, which were tacitly assumed by theologians, and explicitly set forth and argued by moralists, were most severely tested by that arch-enemy of the eighteenth-century optimism, David Hume. In his 'Dialogues on Natural Religion' he argues from the facts of human life against the supposition of a wise and benevolent God. He has no respect for the vague pretty talk about harmony indulged in by Shaftesbury, but sets himself to judge of the value of the Creator's work, by the accessible and determinable facts of conscious human experience. Like another recent Utilitarian, J. S. Mill, Hume while recognising the identity of duty and virtue and of human happiness as a whole, sees clearly enough how little Nature, or her supposed Master, has done for the easy realisation of this twofold good. And like his successor, too, he makes use of the palpable facts of human life as an objection to a complacent belief in the best

conceivable regulation of the world. The universe, he tells us, so far from demonstrating the existence of a kindly paternal ruler, rather suggests a 'blind nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children.' Hume is too calm an intellect to fall back on any extreme theory as to the merits or demerits of the world. Of four hypotheses respecting the causes of the universe—that they are perfectly good, or perfectly bad, or good and bad in conflict, or indifferent—the two simple hypotheses, he tells us, are condemned by the mixture of phenomena; the hypothesis of conflict is condemned by their uniformity; the last, therefore, is regarded as the most probable. Hume is thus a rare instance of a mind which seems to be wholly controlled by reason, and to betray no leaning either to optimism or pessimism.

Passing now from our own literature, we find in France, during this same period, echoes of the contemporary dispute between the reasoned theological forms of optimism and pessimism. Voltaire professed himself to be a theist and optimist after the type of Pope, for whom he expressed so much admiration; and there seems little doubt that in the main he cherished a hopeful view of the world. Yet, with his keen quick intelligence, and his lively sense of irony, he could not well overlook the facts which tell or seem to tell on the other side. In some places, indeed, he writes in a thoroughly pessimistic vein, as when he says, 'Le bonheur n'est qu'un rêve, et la douleur est réelle, il y a quatre-vingt ans que je l'éprouve. Je n'y sais autre chose que me résigner et me dire que les mouches sont nées pour être mangées par les araignées, et les hommes pour être dévorés par les chagrins.' The same tendency appears

again when he writes (lightly enough, no doubt, as measured by the deep-toned pessimism of later times), 'Je ne sais pas ce que c'est que la vie éternelle, mais celle-ci est une mauvaise plaisanterie.' Far more powerful is his protest against a smiling and soothing optimism in the famous poem 'Sur le Désastre de Lisbonne.' In this production, Mr. J. Morley sees 'the reaction of one who had begun life by refuting Pascal with doctrines of cheerfulness drawn from the optimism of Pope and Leibnitz.'[1] In the preface to the poem, Voltaire tells us he is not going 'to combat the illustrious Pope: he is only penetrated with the afflictions of mankind, rising up to protest against the possible abuses of the venerable axiom, "all is well."' He urges that this axiom, 'taken in an absolute sense, and without the hope of a future, is nothing but an insult to the griefs of our life.' In spite of the introduction, however, the poem is sufficiently hostile to the snug comfort of Pope and his co-theists. To such he addresses himself in the lines:—

> Etes-vous assurés que la Cause éternelle,
> Qui fait tout, qui sait tout, qui créa tout pour elle,
> Ne pouvait nous jeter dans ces tristes climats
> Sans former des volcans allumés sous nos pas?

With still more terrible *élan* he attacks the optimism of Shaftesbury and his followers in the lines:—

> Ainsi du monde entier tous les membres gémissent:
> Nés tous pour les tourments, l'un par l'autre, ils périssent:
> Et vous composerez dans ce chaos fatal
> Des malheurs de chaque être un bonheur général!

As Mr. Morley says, this is no philosophy, but 'a passionate ejaculation;' still, as an eloquent assertion of omitted facts

[1] Rousseau, vol. i. p. 315.

of the first magnitude, it is a sufficient argument against much of the easy-going optimism of the time.

It is interesting to compare with these reasonings the views of another Frenchman, J. J. Rousseau, who, curiously enough, defined his relation to the burning question in connection with this same poem. In a letter to Voltaire, written after a perusal of the poem (August 18, 1756) he gives us a confession of his faith which is essentially that of Leibnitz and his English followers. He writes, naïvely enough: 'The poem of Pope softens my evils, and conducts me to patience; yours exasperates my pains, excites me to murmuring, and, taking from me everything except an unsettled hope, it reduces me to despair.' Rousseau's arguments, in answer to Voltaire's facts, contain little that is new. Much of the evil of the disaster of Lisbon is due, he thinks, to preventible causes, as the over-crowding of the population in dense centres. And what is an evil for mankind, may after all be right and beneficial, if, as he thinks, our planet contains but a fraction of the inhabitants of the universe. Events must be considered relatively in the physical order, absolutely only in the moral order. 'The largest idea I can frame of Providence is that each material being is disposed in the best possible way in relation to the whole, and each intelligent and sentient being in the best way possible relatively to himself.' The answer to the question really turns on the previous question of the existence of God, which he cannot help, from extra-rational influences, answering in the affirmative. 'A thousand subjects of preference draw me to the most consolatory side, and join the weight of hope to the equilibrium of reason.' This *credo*, which concludes with a curious description of the contrast of life-conditions between himself

and Voltaire, is chiefly interesting as a frank admission of the influence which feeling and wish may exercise on the optimist's belief.

The question of human virtue and the larger question of human happiness were commonly discussed by the writers of the last century, not for their intrinsic interest alone, but as one form of the problem of final causes. If the existence of a good God is to be inferred from the facts of the world, it is of the utmost consequence to make out that mankind, the reputed creation of this Being, is all that he ought to be. Yet the argument, when nakedly exposed in this shape, has always been felt to be a weak one, owing to the insuperable difficulties presented by the plain facts of the case. The evil of life is not to be ignored by complacent hypotheses respecting the naturalness of virtue and the psychological provisions for a balance of pleasure over pain. Still the teleological foundation for God's existence could not be given up, and the form in which it now began to present itself was as a proof of Divine intelligence and forethought in the arrangements of nature. Even if human life as a whole could not be made out to be what t should be according to human judgment, still there were certain desirable things which appeared to be distinctly secured through intelligent pre-arrangement. It became, therefore, naturally enough, the policy of theological optimism to make the most of these apparent facts, to infer from them the existence of a providential government, ignoring as much as possible all the awkward facts of life which seem to tell against this paternal control.

A review of the successive developments of the teleological argument for a Divine Providence would form a curious chapter of the history of thought. It is in the

nature of this argument that it should easily become a little childish in the hands of some of the more simple-minded among the orthodox. The pre-supposition is, that man is the end of creation, and that everything takes place for his particular good. Perhaps the most quaint examples of this happy way of viewing things are to be found in German literature.[1] Among these writers there is a certain Rathsherr Brockes of Hamburg, who undertakes the agreeable task of expounding, in nine volumes, the truth that everything in the world is destined exclusively for the use and enjoyment of man. Thus the Deity is praised 'as the eternally rich master of the feast' (*Speisemeister*) because of the palatable quality of the various kinds of fruit and esculent animals; and where this virtue of edibility is wanting—as in the case of foxes, wolves, leopards, and so on—great pains are taken to detect some other element of utility. One of the funniest illustrations of this line of reasoning is to be found in a passage in which the author descants on the uses of the several parts of a goose, and winds up with the question: 'Does there not radiate forth from this animal, together with the wisdom and omnipotence of the Creator, his love also?'

It was easy enough to satirise this kind of reasoning; and the quick-sighted Voltaire made excellent literary capital of these arguments, in his charming romance *Candide.* When the pedantic Pangloss is made to say, 'Notice that noses have been made for carrying spectacles; and so we have spectacles. The legs are manifestly instituted in order to be shod, and so we have shoes,' the author is furnishing us with a scarcely unjust caricature of the popular teleological conceptions.

[1] Feuerbach gives an amusing selection from this literature in his 'Pierre Bayle.'

Of course, the teleological method was not always employed in so naïve a manner. Even Pope had indirectly protested against such a confident interpretation of the design of things, in the lines:—

> When the proud steed shall know why man restrains,
> When the dull ox why now he breaks the clod,
> Is now a victim, and now Egypt's god;
> Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend
> His actions', passions', being's use and end.

The logical flaws in the teleological chain of reasoning were forcibly set forth by Hume in the dialogues already referred to.

In the later natural theology of Paley and his school emphasis is laid on the marks of intellectual design in the combinations of organic life, &c. The familiar watch-argument, which has quite recently been revived by so great an intellect as J. S. Mill, is, no doubt, free from the absurdity of some of the teleological arguments just referred to. Only, what it gains in force of argument it loses in extent of conclusion. The method (as Mill plainly sees) is incapable of demonstrating quite as fully as one would like that human happiness is the object, or a principal part of the object, aimed at by the designer. Let it be assumed that we have a proof of intelligence; still, if benevolence, and benevolence which includes mankind among its objects, is not made out, the fact of a presiding intelligence is of little value for us. The supremacy of intelligence ceases to have any optimistic significance as soon as the motive which employs this intelligence becomes uncertain.

Since the time of Paley the further discoveries of natural science have tended to circumscribe the play of this teleological optimism. Just as a scientific astronomy upset the

agreeable notion that man occupied the centre of the universe, so the later science of the origin of organisms has somewhat discredited the supposition that nature is made for man by showing how man may have been made out of nature, and thus assigning to him a place within the whole cycle of natural vents, controlled by uniformity. Not only so; this new science has made it less easy to fall back on the strongest link in the teleological chain, namely, the evidences of design in organic structure. The significance which evolution gives to the relation between organ and function (e.g. the eye and vision) renders less necessary for purposes of immediate explanation the hypothesis of a Divine pre-arrangement and pre-adaptation. Consequently, in these last times the teleologic view of nature upheld by Christianity has had either to take the shape of a faith which seeks to disregard fact and reason, or to fall back on the more philosophical but scarcely optimistic hypothesis that the Divine purpose is some unknown quantity, or at least comprehends interests of which human life forms but a very small fraction, and is carried out by means of the unswerving processes of natural law.

If we now pass to the leading developments of German philosophy we find, on the whole, an optimistic solution of the problem of existence. Kant recognises, indeed, the impossibility of reaching happiness conceived as enjoyment. Man's nature 'is not of the sort to grow still and be pacified anywhere in possession and enjoyment.' 'He shows, too, how nature has failed to provide for all the conditions necessary to human felicity. On the other hand, he finds a path of transition from this empirical pessimism to a metaphysical optimism, namely, the recognition of moral freedom as the ultimate and absolute end of the world.

This freedom can only be obtained through a rupture of that happy and harmless unity with nature in which man is determined exclusively by sensuous impulses, and through the discovery and affirmation of his will.

In Fichte, who with still greater emphasis dwells on the vanity and unreality of the life which adheres to sensuous and limited things, the ethical point of view is still more distinctly put forward as the ultimate principle for interpreting the world. The sensuous phenomena of the external world are simply material for the fulfilment of duty, and the world is called forth in us by the absolute or Divine will for this very reason. The true destination, then, of man is the practical activity of the *Ich*, which reaches in reaction on the external world and in conflict with it the higher moral character. The highest, the absolute, God himself, is nothing but the final end (*Endzweck*) of moral action, or the moral order of the world.

Schelling, whose temporary fit of pessimism has already been described, attempted in his *Philosophie und Religion* to found a splendid conception of history and religion on the Christian doctrine of a fall through sin and a subsequent redemption. Man, who was set as the uniting point in the organism of the world, having stepped out of this original unity with God, nature has risen up against him in hostility and has, moreover, lost the initial stages of its perfection. The history of the world is the process in which man struggles upwards out of his fall, in order to reach the glorification and blessedness for which he was first of all destined. At the same time this process is one of restitution and spiritualisation for nature itself, since its fate is bound up with the destinies of man. This view of the world gives room for much pessimistic complaint, and Schelling

speaks now and again of the 'sadness which cleaves to all finite life,' of the deep indestructible melancholy of all life, and of the veil of depression (*Schwermuth*) which is spread over the whole of nature. Yet it leads up to a final optimistic solution.

With Hegel the solution of the question of the worth of life and the world takes a new shape. As has been shown by Johannes Volkelt,[1] his system of absolute idealism concedes very much to pessimism, while at the same time it reaches an optimistic conception as its last result. According to Hegel, pain is necessarily bound up with all finite existence. In this the eternal unity and universality of the Absolute or the Idea is split up into the infinite sum of individual beings which are all finite and defective, and which, as finite, carry in themselves the germs of annihilation, since they must all be taken back into the unity and infinity of the absolute. In this finitude there springs up consciousness, as separation and opposition to the external world; and thus consciousness is accompanied in its genesis with a feeling of want, that is, with pain. A further partition takes place in consciousness itself between the natural impulses and reason, and the epochs of history show yet another sundering, since a higher standpoint can enter only as a contradiction of a lower. On every such separation there follows a reconciliation, so that the pain of the first is the condition of the joy of the second. Through this process the world-spirit comes at last to its self-comprehension and perfect actuality. 'That the history of the world is this process, and the actual becoming of the spirit, amid the changing drama of its several histories—this is the true theodicy, the justification of God in history. The mind can only reconcile

[1] 'Das Unbewusste und der Pessimismus,' p. 246 *seq.*

itself to the history of the world and to actuality by recognising that what has happened and is happening every day, not only does not happen without God, but is essentially the work of God himself.'[1]

In Schelling and Hegel, we find optimism assuming the shape of a hopeful view of historical evolution. The inspiring influence of an optimistic *Weltanschauung*, is to be realised by conceiving, not the co-existent arrangements of the world, or its statical aspect, but its successive developments and its dynamical tendencies. Even though the universe, regarded as a present co-existing system, is an unsatisfactory and depressing spectacle, this sentiment is resolved into one of exalted satisfaction, by conceiving the world as a process of evolution tending to a rational end.

This impulse to meet the difficulty of pessimism by the affirmation of a tendency in the movement of events to some worthy result is characteristic of modern thought as a whole, and extends far beyond the limits of metaphysical speculation. It appeared in a quasi-scientific shape at the close of the last century, and has since held its ground as a leading doctrine of history.

During the first part of the last century, the idea of human progress seems to have had but little vitality. In the theological controversies of the period, as Mr. Leslie Stephen has pointed out, the supposition of a past moral improvement of the human race was rather discarded by the rationalising Deists, who maintained, against the assertors of a revealed religion, the essential oneness of human nature at all times. Again, in Rousseau, we see a return to the pagan conception of history in the hypothesis of a primal or approximately primal golden age of mankind, and of a

[1] 'Philosophie der Geschichte.' Werke, vol. ix. p. 547.

subsequent degeneration from this pristine existence through excessive intellectual curiosity, &c. The utmost that Rousseau could hold out in the future, was, as Mr. Morley says, the chance of walking for a space in the track of the ancient societies. To use the words of the same critic, Rousseau 'substituted a retrograde aspiration for direction.'

Nevertheless, Rousseau prepared the way for a hopeful doctrine of future progress. By affirming that legislation is able at once, and in all conceivable national circumstances, to recast social institutions, so as to secure that liberty and equality which the past history of mankind has served to destroy, he gave the note of hopeful activity to many of the moral and political reformers who sprang up at the close of the century. If Rousseau's view of the past history of the race was ill fitted to rouse anticipation, his simple confidence in the powers of legislation tended on the other hand to give a cheerful tone to men's forecastings.

The doctrine of human development as an upward progress was first put into a scientific shape by the thinkers who preceded, and in a sense guided, the French Revolution. It appeared under the name of the perfectibility of the human race. As the most reasoned statement of this theory, we may take the writings of Condorcet. In his 'Tableau des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain,' he sketches the past growth of the human mind, and on the basis of this review he infers the unlimited scope for progress in the future developments of mankind. This advance will consist of three principal factors: (*a*) the removal of inequalities among individuals; (*b*) the removal of inequality among nations; and (*c*) the real improvement of mankind.

As might be expected, the enthusiastic advocates of this idea did not always care to keep it within due scientific

bounds, and we find expressions of this faith which, though wearing the guise of reasoned conclusions, are hardly less foolish and childish than much of the theological optimism of the last century. In our own literature, there meets us an example of these extravagant anticipations in the writings of Priestley (to whom Condorcet acknowledges his indebtedness, as one of 'les plus illustres apôtres' of his doctrine), as for example, in the declaration that the end of the world 'will be glorious and paradisaical beyond what our imagination can now conceive.' Still greater is the simplicity of Godwin's faith in the future of mankind, though this faith wears the aspect of being an elaborately argued conclusion. Setting out from a few abstract principles, and ignoring the lessons of history, Godwin argues that all vice is error, and that all that is required to reform men, and to do away with the evils of life, is the enlightenment of reason. The veritable source of misery is, then, not inborn corruption, as the theologians assert, but human ignorance forcibly sustained by the impostures of priests, &c. If only men throw off their shackles, and assert their perfect freedom of thought and action, there is reserved for them a dazzling future, in which there will be no war, no crimes, no government, no disease, anguish, melancholy, or resentment. Human life will be indefinitely extended through the growing power of mind over matter, and propagation and death will cease together.[1]

The disposition to seek an ideal of life, individual and

[1] In connection with Godwin's principles the reader should study their later poetic embodiments in Shelley's 'Revolt of Islam,' &c. The idea of the noble destinies which await the human race when it is freed from oppression and superstition, radiates over Shelley's writings a light in which the dark elements of protestation and condemnation already spoken of become veiled and softened.

social, in the distant future has continued steadily to re-assert itself, in spite of the practical failure of its first advocates. In Comtism the doctrine of historical progress received a new expression, while the social ideal set up as the goal of future endeavour differed essentially from that of Rousseau and his followers. Once more, through the new doctrine of evolution as expounded by Mr. Darwin, and especially by Mr. Herbert Spencer, the modern mind has grown habituated in anticipating an indefinite expansion of human capacity in the future. Finally, the social and political movements of our time point to the widely-spread belief in a new type of social structure in which many of the material evils of the existing order will disappear. Whatever the scientific value of the numerous works which plead for a re-adjustment of the industrial relations of society, it is indisputable that men of high intellectual power, and of wide practical knowledge, agree as to the glorious possibilities of such a transformation. In truth, this social aspiration may be said to afford the one vital type of optimism of our age. We have now to confront it with a theory of life which denies not only the reality of happiness in the past and present, but also the possibility of its attainment in the future.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GERMAN PESSIMISTS: SCHOPENHAUER.

In the various theories of life reviewed in the last chapter, we have met with several philosophic and theological ideas which conduct to a despairing view of present finite existence, but with none which necessitates the condemnation of all existence *per se*. On the contrary the general tendency of the various systems of thought has been to provide some satisfying and peaceful solution of the problem of life and the world. Thus far even reasoned pessimism has been restrained and tempered by the presence of consolatory, if not gladdening, reflections. In one system only, that of metaphysical Buddhism, we meet with a fore-shadowing of a doctrine which condemns existence *in toto*, as necessarily miserable.

The modern German pessimists far outstrip their predecessors in seeking to show that all existence as such is necessarily burthensome, baneful, and a thing to be deplored, thus connecting the evil of human life with a fundamental conception of the nature of things.

The founder of modern pessimism is Arthur Schopenhauer. Others, as we shall see, have built on the lines he laid down, altering, omitting, and adding, as to details, but

not touching the general plan. Let us turn, then, to this writer, and, in order the better to understand his writings, let us glance for a moment or two at the man himself.

The character and life of Arthur Schopenhauer have recently been presented to English readers by Miss Zimmern in a very interesting sketch, which draws its materials from the biographical contributions of Gwinner, Lindner, and Frauenstädt. There is consequently but little need of enlarging on the subject here. A few leading facts may be recalled, in order to furnish the reader with a rough mental image of the man.

Schopenhauer was born at Danzig in 1788. His ancestry was a remarkable one. Several members of his family, which was of Dutch extraction, appear to have distinguished themselves as men of commerce and citizens. Both his father and his mother were persons of character. The father, a rich merchant, was a man of some intellectual culture, holding clear and decided opinions on political subjects, and of so independent a spirit that Frederick the Great in vain sought to win him for a subject. The mother, again, was a woman of a vivacious spirit, and of refined tastes, who found her chief pleasure after her husband's death in the intellectual society of Weimar.

On the other hand, there seem to have been distinct traces of mental disease in the family. Arthur's grandmother, who bore her husband an idiotic son, herself became imbecile with advancing age. His father, too, was of a gloomy and moody temperament, and subject to violent outbursts of passion. Towards the close of his life, he manifested so excessive an anxiety about his affairs that he was supposed to be suffering from mental derangement; and his death, through a fall into the canal, was attributed by

rumour to suicide. As we shall presently see, some of these morbid characteristics were shared by the pessimist.

Early in life, Arthur accompanied his parents in their pretty extensive travels, which included England in their sweep. It was during this visit that he acquired some of his exact knowledge of English life, social and political, as well as the rudiments of his lasting taste for our literature. It was then, too, that he laid the foundations for his hearty dislike of many of the political and social aspects of our life. Like another pessimist, Heinrich Heine, Schopenhauer conceived a deep detestation of the narrowness and bigotry of the English mind. Of this sentiment he gives ample proof in his writings. He says in one place, 'It is time to send to England to meet the Reverends a missionary of reason, with the writings of Strauss in one hand, and the *Critic* of Kant in the other.'

Like Heine, too, in another particular, Schopenhauer essayed the life of a house of commerce at Hamburg, much to his disgust and weariness. His discontent grew so importunate that his widowed mother, who had now taken up her residence in Weimar, consented to his entering on the student life for which he ardently craved. His studies both at the gymnasium and at the University (in Göttingen and in Berlin) embraced a wide and varied field, including several branches of physical science as well as philosophy, jurisprudence, and history. In Berlin he heard Fichte and Schleiermacher. His linguistic capabilities were very considerable, and his private studies included many works of foreign literature, more especially English and French. Among his favourite authors may be mentioned Locke, Hume, Voltaire, Helvetius, Rochefoucauld, and Chamfort.

During his sojourns at Weimar, he seems to have agreed but ill with his mother, whose gay temperament and love of society were eminently distasteful to a youth already betraying a strong leaning to solitude and to misanthropy. Weimar, however, gave him the opportunity of knowing and admiring Minister Goethe, though the interest appears to have been largely on one side. About this time he published his first work, a tract on the Principle of the Sufficient Reason, for which the University of Jena conferred on him the degree of doctor of philosophy. This publication did not apparently attract much attention, though it enlisted the interest of Goethe. He also essayed a theory of colours, which reposes to a large extent on Goethe's conceptions. In Dresden, to which city he repaired after completing his University studies, he had rich opportunities of fashioning his taste for art. In spite of the attractive life of this charming city, his nature grew more distinctly discontented, suspicious, and misanthropic. At an age when most men erect woman into an idol of worship, Schopenhauer learnt to place her foremost among the objects of a contemptuous dislike.

In 1819, that is to say, when he was thirty-one years old, he published his principal work, 'Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung.' It proved at the time to be a dead failure, and the disappointment thus occasioned aggravated the pessimist's dejection of mind. The thickening gloom was only very slightly lightened by a long sojourn in Italy, where he seems still further to have developed his studies of art. Matters were still worse after an abortive attempt in the following year to draw around him as *privat-docent* an audience in the University of Berlin. Hegel's influence at this time was predominant, and Schopenhauer conceived

a hearty dislike for this philosopher,[1] and for chair-philosophers in general, which last sentiment, it may be observed, is shared by his successor, Edward von Hartmann. Schopenhauer had a third bugbear besides women and professors of philosophy, namely, Jews. These he appears to have regarded as the embodiment of a coarse material optimism.

At Frankfort, where Schopenhauer finally determined to live, he grew a confirmed solitaire, maintaining, on the whole, except when approached by one or two admiring disciples, a taciturnity which showed at least a considerable strength of self-command. In 1839 he was fortunate enough to win a prize bestowed by a Norwegian University, for an essay on the vexed question of the Freedom of the Will. He also wrote two essays on ethical problems, with a like object, though these did not win the coveted prize. Soon after he published the second volume of his great work. Yet this persevering literary activity did not at the time secure him a large recognition. Probably the political commotions of the period rendered impossible the direction of much serious attention to new philosophical productions. Schopenhauer, like Goethe, lacked strong political interests, regarding patriotism as 'the passion of fools,' and caring only for that political stability which was a condition of un-

[1] Schopenhauer's opinion of Hegel deserves perhaps to be quoted, as a choice example of literary suavity: 'The whole history of literature, ancient and modern, can show no example of false celebrity comparable with that of the Hegelian philosophy. Never and nowhere has the utterly bad, the palpably false and absurd, nay, the manifestly nonsensical, and added to this, the most repulsive and disgusting in diction, been praised with such revolting impudence, such an iron brow, as the highest wisdom, the most glorious thing the world has ever seen, as this thoroughly worthless pseudo-philosophy (After-philosophie).'—'Parerga und Paralipomena,' 'Ueber Urtheil, Kritik, Beifall und Ruhm,' Werke VI., 501.

interrupted individual study. Hence he had no sympathy with the revolutionary movements of 1848, but on the contrary approved of the somewhat sanguinary suppression of the risings in his own city. In 1851 he published his 'Parerga und Paralipomena,' the popular style of which contributed, no doubt, to his now rising literary fame. The recognitions of the press, English and German, gave him much delight, and his old age seems to have been rendered less querulous and disaffected by the gratification which his late-earned celebrity brought him. He died in 1860.

The character of this extraordinary man calls for a few remarks. The first thing that strikes one, perhaps, is the contemptuous attitude which he habitually maintained towards his fellows. He was a misanthrope, whose misanthropy took the shape of an intellectual rather than a moral contempt.[1] Like Jonathan Swift, he thought most men fools, always taking care to secure a place for himself in the minority. Schopenhauer prided himself on his intellectual self-esteem in the face of the general disregard of his contemporaries. Indeed, he consciously went to work to cultivate this intellectual misanthropy. 'Study,' he writes among his maxims, 'to acquire an accurate and connected view of the utter despicability of mankind in general.' Now, others besides Schopenhauer have professed to despise the opinions of the many, but then they have been careful to confirm their estimate of their own powers by an appeal to a minority recognised as competent. Schopenhauer's

[1] No doubt, at bottom it was much the same as this moral contempt, since each appears to be connected with a fundamental unsociability and Ishmaelitic hostility of temper. In truth, Schopenhauer, in spite of his favourite doctrine of pity, seems to have been sufficiently misanthropic in the wider sense; only, the intellectual expression of his anti-sociability is its most remarkable aspect.

self-confidence was large enough to dispense even with this test.

Of course, nobody is consistently indifferent to the opinion of others, and even Schopenhauer had, under all his professions of contempt, a lively sensibility for the sweets of recognition and applause. One sees, indeed, that this misanthropy was largely fed by his successive failures to win recognition both as a teacher and as a writer. His eager curiosity to see what the papers said about him, when they at last broke their long and cruel silence, shows clearly enough that the pessimist was less contemptuous of the judgments of others than he affected to be. That he had a large fund of natural independence—I will not say intellectual vanity—is certain, only he had not the perfect stability of conviction which lends the calm dignity of conscious superiority. The vague consciousness of needing that which he was at the same time half disposed to despise contributed one element of the moral dissonance of the man.

A similar element of conflict meets us when we turn to a second fundamental quality of Schopenhauer's character, namely, a disposition to melancholy. A man whose incurable timidity caused him to start at the thought of possible evil whenever the postman brought him a letter, who carried a leathern drinking-cup about with him in order to avoid contagion by using hotel glasses, and who, even when moving through sunny Italy describes his sensations as those of one who has suddenly stepped into cold water, must, one supposes have had a sufficiently gloomy temperament. By the natural bent of his mind, he was disposed to throw a dark pall about the world and to perceive the evil rather than the good of life. Yet even here Nature had not shaped her offspring symmetrically. With all his tendency to gloomy

fears and suspicions, he had a certain relish for the pleasures of life, which showed itself, as if by some irony of fate, in relation to the object which he most affected to despise, namely, the female sex. Schopenhauer's asceticism was not perfectly successful in relation to the charms of women. Another manifestation of a weakness for worldly enjoyment meets us in his liking for Rossini's music—a fact, by the bye, which is especially curious, inasmuch as Schopenhauer is regarded as the philosophic antecedent of Wagner, while Wagnerism is opposed before all things to the 'ear-tickling' melody of Rossini and his followers.

This second element of conflict in Schopenhauer's moral and intellectual composition must, one fancies, have been productive of singularly harsh effects. To be on the whole a believer in the misery of life and yet to be occasionally visited by a vivid sense of its gleaming gladness is surely the worst of conceivable positions. Most of us, probably, have theories of life which rest on prevailing convictions, and we are frequently aware of slight discrepancies between the momentary belief and the permanent creed. But when, as mostly happens, the abiding conviction is more salutary and stimulating than the temporary one, the discrepancy does not greatly disturb us. We recognise that the lasting conviction is *better* than the fugitive suspicion, and are ready to risk the doubt. If, however, as was the case with Schopenhauer, the temporary belief is cheering while the permanent one is depressing, the mind has, in addition to the dejection which results from its dominant conviction, the painful sting of the suspicion that after all the depressing view of things may be a foolish and unnecessary piece of self-affliction. It seems to me that a keen sense of this contradiction between theory and impulse greatly aided to

intensify Schopenhauer's natural irritability, and, one may add, his hostile and misanthropic feelings.

These are the features which naturally arrest one's attention in contemplating Schopenhauer's moral structure. It is to be added that there is another way of approaching the strange character of the man. Reference has already been made to certain morbid tendencies in Schopenhauer's ancestors, and the question naturally arises whether, in spite of his great intellectual abilities, the pessimist had some 'taint of blood' which served to impress on his habitual consciousness its gloomy and discordant character. There is little doubt that medical men would regard Schopenhauer as suffering from some form of hereditary disease, probably brain-disease. Indeed, a certain German doctor has taken the pains to give an account of Schopenhauer from the medical point of view, in which diagnosis he seeks to define the nature of the disease and to trace out its various symptoms, both in the pessimist himself and in other members of his family.[1] Into the question of the exact nature of this disease we cannot enter here. Suffice it to have remarked the fact that Schopenhauer's naturally pessimistic tone of mind may be conceived as but the other side of a physical defect.

With this rough and very incomplete view of Schopenhauer's life and character let us pass to consider his system of philosophy. Of this I can only give a bare outline, in which I shall draw mainly from his *opus magnum*, 'The World as Will and Intellectual Representation;[2] ('Die Welt

[1] 'Doctor Arthur Schopenhauer vom medicinischen Standpunkte betrachtet' von Carl von Seidlitz. Dorpat, 1872.

[2] The term *Vorstellung*, with Schopenhauer, as with some other German metaphysicians, plays about the same part as the word 'idea' in Berkeley's writings. It includes both sensuous perception and imagina-

als Wille und Vorstellung'). This treatise contains all his main ideas, while his later writings serve chiefly to illustrate, render more definite, and trace to their conclusions, these first principles.

The philosophy which conceives the world as Will and mental representation, and leads to a total condemnation of human existence, takes as its starting-point Kant's Subjective Idealism. The world of phenomena known in sensuous perception exists only for our percipient minds. Its essential nature, therefore, is mental representation (*Vorstellung*). The multiplicity of individual objects which Schopenhauer brings under a principle of individuation (*principium individuationis*), the relations of time and space, the law of causation, are valid for our experience in so far as this is *Vorstellung*, but can never be applied to anything outside experience. This world of appearance (*Erscheinung*) depends on mental activity, and ceases to exist when the percipient mind ceases. Nevertheless this phenomenal world is not the whole of existence. Kant had recognised the *Ding an sich* as an 'unexplored remainder,' and Schopenhauer proceeds to discover the nature of this absolute being, this noumenon.

Previous German thinkers, more particularly Hegel, had conceived this absolute existence, which transcends and enfolds all that is known to us as subject and object, as something quasi-intellectual, as idea, or thought. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, finds an expression for it in another factor of the human mind. To him the one universal substance is Will. This Will, to use Schopenhauer's own

tive reproduction, presentation as well as representation. It cannot, therefore, be translated by any one English term. I have chosen the term which in its looser sense approximately conveys Schopenhauer's meaning, not liking to follow a recent example by employing the unsuggestive and cumbersome term 'envisagement.'

words, is 'the innermost essence, the kernel of every individual thing, and equally so of the totality of existence. It appears in every blind force of nature; it manifests itself also in the deliberate action of man.'[1] That Will is the ultimate principle of things may be proved to some extent. If we look into our own self-consciousness we find that Will and Will only forms its content and immediate object. The cognitive mind cannot itself be known in self-consciousness; that which is known is exclusively Will; 'for not only volition and resolve in the narrowest sense, but all striving, wishing, shunning, hoping, fearing, loving, hating, in short, all that immediately composes our individual weal and woe, pleasure and pain, is manifestly nothing but an affection of the will.'[2]

Schopenhauer argues further that in penetrating into the innermost nature of material things we, no less certainly, reach this fundamental entity, Will, namely, in the so-called forces of the inorganic and organic world. Instead of subsuming the notion Will under that of force, as modern savants are wont to do, he reverses the process. The justification of this course is that we know nothing of the physical forces apart from their phenomenal effects, whereas Will is known immediately as that which underlies all phenomena. 'By reducing the notion of force to that of will, we have reduced, in fact, something more unfamiliar to a thing infinitely better known, nay more, to that which alone is known to us immediately and completely' (i. 133).

Schopenhauer takes great pains to show that intellect is secondary to will, both in the human mind and in the

[1] 'Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung,' i. p. 131. My references are throughout to Frauenstädt's edition of Schopenhauer's 'Werke.'

[2] *Op. cit.* ii. p. 225.

animal mind generally. Intellect decreases as we descend the animal scale, not so will. Again, intellect becomes exhausted, whereas will is perfectly free from all effort and fatigue. Once more, the intellect can only perform its function properly when the will 'is silent and pauses.' Will, as character, has always been recognised as the constant unchanging factor in the individual mind, while intellect has been seen to be the changing and uncertain element.[1]

Schopenhauer nowhere defines what he means by will except by telling us that it contains the various manifestations of impulse and feeling, and by marking it off from intellect. He is very particular on this last point, affirming in one place that 'we must think away the co-operation of the intellect, if we would comprehend the nature of will in itself, and thereby penetrate as far as possible into the inner parts of nature.' According to modern psychology mind consists of three essentially different activities—feeling, intellect, and volition. Schopenhauer distinguishes the third of these from the second, but not from the first.

Will, then, is the ultimate reality. But how does it differ from our phenomenal wills? First of all, as noumenon, it lies outside the forms of time and of plurality. It knows no past or future, no before or after, but its existence is an eternal now. It is, moreover, one and indivisible, including in a single unity its countless individual manifestations.

Again, since causality belongs exclusively to the region of the *Vorstellung*, we must not conceive will as the cause of the universe. It is the essence of the world—its real being—but not its cause. Every phenomenon is the product of two factors, first the constant principle of being,

[1] ii. Cap. xix. 'Vom Primat des Willens im Selbstbewusstseyn.'

will, and secondly, a variable phenomenal cause, which receives from the first its possibility as action.

Just as little as will is to be regarded as a cause in relation to the phenomenal world, is its action to be conceived as determined by causation. While the phenomenal will is as much under the law of cause and effect as any physical process, the noumenal will (as with Kant) is 'free' from all determination. It cannot be said to be under any necessity to act, even though, as Schopenhauer frequently tells us, it is its essential nature to will or strive. Schopenhauer makes full use of this doctrine of freedom later on.

Once more, the real will is unconscious, destitute of intellectual representation or prevision, and cannot, therefore, be said to have a purpose in its action. Purpose to Schopenhauer is synonymous with motivation, and so with limitation and determination. He contends, indeed, with great earnestness, that purpose is everywhere present in nature, even where, as in the inorganic world, we fail to discover it;[1] but this teleological conception, like that of causation, is valid only for phenomena as representations in our intelligence, it does not apply to the noumenon—will. 'Absence of end,' says the author, 'of all limits belongs to the nature of will *per se*, which is an endless striving.'

It is very difficult to reconcile this theory of a purely

[1] Schopenhauer discusses the method of teleology very fully, meeting the various objections commonly urged against it (ii. 375–397: cf. Cap. 28). He seeks to distinguish rational from theological teleology, and has a characteristic tirade against 'the English of to-day, the Bridgwater-treatise men,' who upon every new discovery of adaptation in nature 'break out into a childish cry, "Design, design!"' This state of things is owing partly to our ignorance of Kant, and partly 'to the wicked (*heillos*) influence of the abominable English clergy' (ii. 386).

purposeless will with many passages in Schopenhauer's writings, as when he speaks of the will as a striving after manifestation, and the 'highest possible objectification' in organic life and consciousness. In one place he distinctly tells us that 'everything urges and forces itself to existence, if possible to organic existence or life, and after that to the greatest possible augmentation (*Steigerung*) of life' (ii. 399). This seems to show that Schopenhauer oscillated between two incompatible interpretations of teleology.[1]

In any case the will tends, by its very nature, to manifest or objectify itself. How, then, does this self-objectification take place? Here we are brought face to face with Schopenhauer's peculiar and rather difficult doctrine of the Platonic ideas, or the universal forms of existing individual things. 'I understand,' he says, 'by Idea every definite and fixed grade of objectification of will, in so far as this is *Ding an sich* and consequently knows nothing of plurality.' These ideas are universal like will, also outside the forms of space and time.

Sometimes Schopenhauer speaks of these ideas as though they were the archetypes, according to which will fashions the world; but he gives them a somewhat different position from that which they occupy in Plato's system. They appear to be an intermediate region between the ultimate reality and the phenomenal world, themselves derived from the first, and in their turn serving as the source of derivation of the second.

[1] Frauenstädt and Hartmann both point to a certain inconsistency in Schopenhauer respecting the existence of purpose in the world. There is a manifest leaning to an objective teleology in Schopenhauer's later writings, where he conceives will as universally accompanied by unconscious representation. This is only one example of his gradual withdrawal from the Kantian position of subjective idealism which he first took up.

The relations of superiority and inferiority in this hierarchy of ideas would seem to point to a basis for a philosophical conception of the history of the world, for the 'higher' and 'lower' correspond to the degree of complexity of the various groups of individual objects, inorganic and organic. Yet, since the ideas are outside time, we can hardly look at these different degrees of objectification as successive. At most they shadow forth the different steps which, in the phenomenal world, take the aspect of sequence or historical succession.

Taken in this sense, the several gradations of the will's manifestations are traced in the various regions of inorganic and organic matter. In the first place matter is conceived as that through which the will, the inner essence of things, becomes visible and capable of being intuited.. The several physical forces are immediate objectifications of will, and it is through these that its secondary manifestations in individual things are effected. Schopenhauer seeks to show that the various actions of the natural forces, being reducible to a striving towards, or away from, certain positions, can only be conceived as a mode of volition.

In the organic world will is seen manifesting itself through a higher idea. The appearance of this higher idea is said to arise out of a conflict between different manifestations of will in the inorganic world. Schopenhauer argues that, according to this view, organic life is something more than a product of the inorganic forces—mechanical, chemical, &c. The actions of living organisms, including the processes of growth and reparation, are all modes of volition or striving. The self-objectification here takes a more definite shape, as an impulse to conservation, both of the individual and of the species.

In conscious beings we have a double objectification of will, a primary or immediate in the body and brain, and a secondary or mediate in the functions of consciousness which depend on the cerebral structures. In this conscious intelligence will objectifies itself as a willing to know (*Erkennen-wollen*). Just as the whole organism is simply the individual manifestation of will looked at objectively, the foot being the will to walk, the stomach the will to digest, &c., so the brain is but the objective aspect of the will to know.

Schopenhauer reasons that consciousness is a necessary condition of the highest objectification of will. 'The necessity of consciousness is brought about by the fact that, in consequence of the increased complexity of an organism, and of the greater multiformity of its wants which thus results, the actions of its will have to be guided by motives, and no longer, as in the lower stages, through simple stimuli.'

It follows from Schopenhauer's doctrine of will that our inmost personality, our very essence, lies deeper than consciousness. In one place he speaks of this as our fixed *à priori* 'intelligible' character.[1] This factor cannot undergo any modification from the various influences under which we may fall in our course of development. With mental expansion we learn what we are, but our wills or characters undergo no alteration in consequence of these acquisitions. Schopenhauer is never tired of reminding us that we cannot be taught to will (*velle, non discitur*). This

[1] Schopenhauer distinguishes the empirical from the intelligible character, the former being the manifestation in time of the latter, which lies out of time. From this fixed factor he further distinguishes the acquired character (i. 355 *seq.*).

fixed will or character is the real fountain of our actions, external motives being merely the special conditions for its various particular manifestations.

Yet this intelligible character of the individual is not his deepest essence or reality. The inmost kernel of our nature is the one universal will, which must be conceived as somehow distinct from, though including in itself, this substratum of intelligible character. This ultimate reality of our being appears to manifest itself both in actions which tend to the conservation of the individual and in those which serve to prolong the life of the species. Of these two manifestations of will, the latter is more immediate than the former (since species answers to the Platonic Idea), and consequently presents itself as a more energetic utterance. 'The innermost nature of every animal and so of man, lies in the species.' Hence we find the individual ready to sacrifice itself for its offspring.

Schopenhauer seeks to illustrate the action of this blind striving after the life of the species in sexual love; and his account of this emotion,[1] in which his successor Hartmann follows him very closely, constitutes one of the most curious features of the pessimist philosophy. Here he tells us that 'all that we mean by being in love (*Verliebtheit*), however ætherial it may appear, is rooted solely in the sexual impulse; nay, more, is from first to last only a sexual impulse more exactly defined, specialised, in the strictest sense individualised.'[2] The growing mutual inclination of two young people is, properly speaking, the will of the new individual

[1] Band ii. cap. xiv., 'Metaphysik der Geschlechtsliebe.'

[2] He adds that the sexual instinct is necessarily illusion (*Wahn*), since nature could not here reach its ends except the individual believed that what is in reality done for the species is good for itself.

which they are capable of begetting. It is the will of the species urging them, which here anticipates an objectification of its nature in a new individual. This new being is to unite the will of the father with the intellect of the mother, while its bodily organism is to be derived from both.

Schopenhauer then seeks to show in a very curious fashion how this underlying instinct serves to determine the direction of love to one particular person rather than to another. First of all, since the will desires to represent the character of the species, the lover's inclination gravitates most powerfully to health, vigour, and beauty, and so to youth. The characters commonly sought in love, including even such trifles as a well-formed nose and a small foot, point to this instinctive impulse to realise the dominant typical features of the species. Besides these 'absolute considerations' which unconsciously influence the sexes in general, there are 'relative considerations' which vary with the individual. Since the unconscious aim of this sexual will is a new embodiment of the specific type, the defects of the one lover must be compensated for by the excellences of the other. Thus the most manly man will seek the most womanly woman, a person muscularly weak will select one muscularly strong, a very small person a large one, and so on. As with bodily peculiarities, so with differences of temperament. It is this complementary fitness which is really meant when lovers talk about 'harmony of souls,' a thing, says the pessimist, which is very liable to be resolved into discord after marriage. The profound seriousness which both sexes display in selecting their lovers is to be explained as an unconscious recognition of the importance of the end to be gained. So, too, 'the longing and pain of love cannot derive their material from the wants of an ephemeral

individual; but they are the sighs of the spirit of the species which here discerns an irrecoverable means to its ends, either to be won or to be lost.'

Such are the main outlines of Schopenhauer's philosophy, so far as it bears on the question now before us. Let us now see how he deduces from these theoretic principles his pessimist conclusions respecting life, and more especially human life.

Through the world of representation (made possible by the development of a brain), the will, which in itself is only a blind or restrainable impulse (*Drang*), reaches a knowledge of its volition, and of the object of this volition, and finds that this latter is 'this world, life, exactly as it stands.' In short, will manifests itself in man and the lower animals as will to live (*der Wille zum Leben*). Life is that for which everything pants and labours. Deep below all conscious pursuit of life's various ends, there lies this instinctive impulse towards life itself, which shows itself in the actions which make for the conservation both of the individual and of the species. That this will to live is 'the most real of all things, the kernel of all reality' is seen in the stir which men make in order to preserve life, in the boundless terror which they feel when life is in jeopardy, in the horror which seizes them when they hear of a capital sentence, and so on (ii. 400).

If, then, life is what we are all striving after, with this vehemence of impulse, does the end justify such earnestness of pursuit? Is that for which the will is ever craving fitted to yield it real satisfaction? This question Schopenhauer answered by an unqualified 'No.' This ardent pursuit springs out of blind instinct, not out of rational choice. Men do not seek to live because they know they can be

happy: they think they can be happy because an irresistible pressure urges them to live. Happiness, which, to Schopenhauer and his followers, is interpreted by the Hedonist's standard as a balance of pleasure over pain, is an illusion by means of which the impatient and insatiable will within us seeks to blind us to its real nature. Life, in truth, so far from being a state of enjoyment, is always and necessarily one of suffering.

The deepest reason of this suffering lies in the nature of will itself. Will, as we have seen, is, in its nature, striving; but striving is necessarily suffering. 'All striving springs out of defect, and discontent with its condition, is therefore suffering, so long as it is not pacified.' Again, since the nature of will is to strive, and since will is the real and persistent element of our nature, permanent satisfaction is out of the question. 'No satisfaction is enduring, it is rather the starting-point for a new striving.' Our nature is thus a perpetual striving, and may be compared in every respect with an insatiable thirst.

Not only is such pleasure as is possible to us momentary because crushed out, so to speak, by new striving on the part of the restless will, it is never anything but negative, that is to say, it is in no case 'a delight which is original and comes to us of itself, but always consists in the stilling of a wish.' 'Wish (that is, defect) is the antecedent condition of all enjoyment. With pacification, however, the wish ceases, and so the enjoyment. Consequently, satisfaction, or the state of happiness (*Beglückung*), can be nothing more than deliverance from a pain, from a need.'

This idea of the essentially negative character of pleasure, which, as we have seen, was propounded in a more modest

shape by Plato, is presented to us from a slightly different point of view in another passage.

'We feel pain, but not painlessness; we feel care, but not freedom from care; fear, but not security. We feel the wish as we feel hunger and thirst; but as soon as it is fulfilled, it is much the same as with the agreeable morsel, which, the very moment it is swallowed, ceases to exist for our sensibility. We miss painfully our pleasures and joys, as soon as they fail us; but pains are not immediately missed even when they leave us, after tarrying long with us, but at most we remember them voluntarily by means of reflection. For only pain and want can be felt positively, and so announce themselves as something really present; happiness, on the contrary, is simply negative. Accordingly, we do not appreciate the three greatest goods of life, health, youth, and freedom, as long as we possess them, but only after we have lost them; for these also are negations. That certain days of our life were happy ones, we recognise first of all after they have made room for unhappy ones' (ii. 659, 660).

In other words, Schopenhauer seems to say that, since pain is a real positive state, the absence of it, as a pure negation, does not affect us; whereas, since pleasure is simply the negation of a painful state, its absence, involving the presence of this positive state of pain, is necessarily felt. It is because of this negative character of all enjoyment that poets are compelled to bring their heroes into alarming and painful situations; for it is only by freeing them from such painful conditions, that they are able to give a representation of enjoyment.

Yet again, when definite objects do not offer themselves to the will's striving, this impulse still shows itself in the

shape of ennui. This is conceived by Schopenhauer as a sense of the burden of existence after it is secured, and an impulse to rid oneself of the load. 'Ennui is anything but an unimportant evil: in the end it paints true despair on the countenance.' As soon as the pain which belongs to a felt want is relieved, we become a prey to ennui. 'Human life oscillates between pain and ennui, which two states are indeed the ultimate elements of life.' 'As want is the constant scourge of the people, so is ennui that of the fashionable world.'

The misery of life, which is thus essentially connected with the nature of will, increases in the direct ratio of consciousness or intelligence. In the lower species of animals it is trifling; it becomes intense in the vertebrates; and reaches its maximum in man. 'Man, as the most perfect objectification of will, is accordingly the most needy among all beings: he is concrete willing and needing through and through, a concrete embodiment of a thousand needs.' The more intelligent the man, the deeper the suffering; and the man of genius suffers most acutely of all. Schopenhauer thinks this relation between intelligence and suffering is well illustrated in a picture by 'a philosophic artist, or an artistic philosopher,' one Tischbein, which in its upper part represents a group of women being robbed of their children, and in its lower half a corresponding group of sheep deprived of their lambs.

While Schopenhauer thus places the main ground of life's misery in the nature of will, he appears here and there to recognise other contributory influences. Thus in one place he affirms that the effect of habit tends to blunt the sense of pleasure, while it increases sensibility to pain. 'In the proportion in which enjoyments increase, the suscept-

ibility to them declines; what is customary is not felt as pleasurable. But just because of this the sensibility to pain increases; for the loss of the customary and familiar is felt as painful. Thus, in the degree in which we possess, the bulk of our want increases, and so the capability of feeling pain.'

Once more, Schopenhauer follows older pessimists in laying great stress on the evanescence of life. The present only is real, and this is continually becoming a part of the dead past. The future is wholly uncertain and always short. On the bodily side our life is 'but a continually checked process of dying, an ever-postponed death. At last Death must conquer; for by the very fact of birth we are made over to him, and he is only playing awhile with his prey before he swallows it.'

With Schopenhauer, then, the evil of human existence is determined *à priori* by a mere consideration of the nature and conditions of our being. At the same time he tells us that a similar result may be reached *à posteriori*, that is, by a careful observation of human experience. He thinks, indeed, that the chapter which supplied this empirical proof would have no end, though it would be easy to obtain the proof. 'Everyone (he writes) who has awakened from the first dreams of youth, who observes his own and others' experience, and is conversant with life, with the history of the past and with that of his own age, and in addition is familiar with the works of the great poets, will admit, unless some ineradicable prejudice paralyses his judgment, that this human world is the domain of accident and error.' In another place he says if anybody will 'compare the sum of possible joys which a man can experience during his lifetime with the sum of possible sufferings which can

overtake him during the same period, the balance will not be difficult to strike.'

If the reader inquires whether the world must always be as bad as it is now, whether the tendencies of progress as revealed in history do not point to a less dreary state of things hereafter, Schopenhauer is ready with an answer. All progress as intellectual development necessarily increases the amount of suffering, so that the world is tending to become worse instead of better. Further, Schopenhauer, as Hartmann observes, had a curious contempt for history. His conception of the order of time as essentially unreal led him to speak of the past as 'humanity's dream, long, heavy, and confused.' Nor had he any vision for its ideal and hopeful aspects.

The one oasis in this desert of human existence is, according to our author, the peculiar delight realised in the contemplation of works of art. This blissful condition arises through a sudden emergence of the knowing mind 'out of the endless stream of willing.' In the enjoyment of art we intuit the object not as a mere individual appearance, but as a part of the universal reality. This Schopenhauer expressed by saying that in the work of art we contemplate the pure (Platonic) idea. Moreover, in this exalted state of mind the artist is conscious of himself not as an individual but as pure will-less subject of knowledge. When we contemplate the beautiful aspects of nature and art, we regard the objects apart from their relation to our desires or will, that is to say, as Kant puts it, without interest and in pure objectivity. By this means 'the rest, ever sought but ever flying from us, in that first way of willing, comes of itself, and we are fully at ease.' This

is the familiar state of mind which Epicurus praised as the highest good and as the condition of the gods.

Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that this benign effect of art materially alters the character of life. This purest joy of life, Schopenhauer tells us in another place, is only attainable by a very few, because of the rare endowments which it presupposes. Also to these few it is only vouchsafed as a transient dream, and the intellectual force which it demands exposes its subjects, as we have seen, to a far greater amount of pain than duller minds can experience.

Such, then, is the account of life supplied by Schopenhauer's scheme of philosophy. And now the question arises: 'What are we to do with so wretched an existence?' How does the author fit in this conception of life with his practical and ethical teaching? What does he propose as the right and worthy line of conduct in the midst of such a world as that which he paints?

If, says Schopenhauer, after the will, through the genesis of a brain and consciousness, has reached a representation of its objectivity, that is, of the world and life, this knowledge of its real nature in no wise checks its willing, but the life thus known is still willed as such, just as before when the will was simply a blind impulse, the will may be said to *affirm itself*. If, on the other hand, this knowledge, rising to an apprehension of the universal ideas, and so of the nature of the world as a whole, acts as a quietive to the will, we have the *negation* or *denial of will*.

This conscious affirmation of will is to Schopenhauer the source of all human folly and of all immorality. The most energetic form of it is seen in the affirmation not of the individual will but of that of the species. 'The sexual

impulse shows itself to be the strongest affirmation of will to live, in that it is to the natural man, as to the beast, the ultimate aim and the highest end of his life.'[1] Again all egoism and wrong rest on a rampant affirmation of will to live. Egoism is such a self-affirmation of the will in one individual as reaches to the denial of the same in another individual. 'This breaking in within the boundary of a foreign affirmation of will has been recognised from of old, and the notion of the act has been characterised by the term wrong (*Unrecht*).'

The denial of will to live, on the other hand, proceeding from a recognition of the true nature of life, is the basis of all wise and virtuous conduct, and offers the one means of escaping from the huge misery of existence. Schopenhauer regards this process from two points of view. In the first place, he distinctly traces it to the action of fully developed intellect, and often speaks of it as a reaction of intellect on will in which the latter is passive. He even calls it on one occasion an emancipation of the intellect from the will, a phrase that will meet us again in Hartmann's philosophy. In the second place, he quite as frequently speaks of this act of denial as issuing from the will itself in the new light shed on it by intellect. He takes pains, indeed, to show how such an apparent contradiction as the denial by a thing of its essential function is fully resolved by help of the idea of freedom. The will which thus denies

[1] Schopenhauer's contempt for women takes a quasi-rational form in the idea that their one function is that of propagation. Woman to him is the embodiment of weak immediate impulse as distinguished from a rational direction of conduct. She is, he tells us, made to obey, and even when thrown on her own resources instinctively attaches herself to some man. If she is young it is a lover, if she is old a confessor. (See 'Paralipomena und Parerga.' 'Ueber die Weiber,' Werke VI.)

itself is the noumenon, liberated from the conditions of causation, and so free. This will, taking the perfect intelligence of which it is the real origin, and applying it to itself, effects an abolition (*Aufhebung*) and denial of itself in its most perfect manifestation.

Schopenhauer distinguishes two stages in this denial of will. The nascent or preparatory stage is that of virtue, which he regards as consisting essentially of love, and this again of pity. This temper of mind rests on a certain growth of intelligence through which the essential oneness of ourselves and others becomes recognised. Schopenhauer calls the principle of individuation (*principium individuationis*) the veil of Maja. This has to be seen through, and the essential unity of all clearly discerned. When this happens, the will no longer affirms itself individually to the exclusion or denial of others' wills, as in the case of the selfish and unjust man, but is subdued and partly quieted by the intellectual realisation of the one reality which underlies and binds all together. With this consideration for others as of equal importance with the individual there begins to dawn the recognition of the evil of life, and thus there arises the sentiment of love, which even in its simplest forms is a half-conscious pity, a feeling for the sadness of the common human lot.

This virtuous state, however, is not the full denial of will, though it naturally leads up to it. The man who has learnt to forego selfish aims in favour of the good of others, and has taken the collective human lot on his shoulders, cannot well remain where he is. A fuller recognition of the emptiness of life will lead men to renounce its aims, and the self-denial involved in virtue will readily pass into a full denial of will to live. The man who has attained to this

full denial of will sinks into a condition of quiescence, out of which no glittering image, no bright promise, is able to entice him. Schopenhauer seems to think that such an elevated condition of spirit cannot be maintained except by great effort, and it is when speaking of these efforts that his language involves most distinctly the idea that this self-negation of will is itself an act of will. Perhaps it would be best representing his view to say that the process involves volition, while the result does not.

The true character of this process is illustrated in two ways. First of all, it is presented to us as the essential principle of all *asceticism*; secondly, it is very carefully distinguished from the kind of despair of life which conducts to suicide.

Schopenhauer finds the essence of this denial of will to live in the practices of all ascetics, mystics, and recluses. On the one side, mysticism represents that higher development of intellect through which the illusion of the individual and the phenomenal becomes recognised, and the spirit turns to a contemplation of the eternal ideas. On the other side, asceticism illustrates the practical retirement from life, its alluring pleasures, and its absorbing aims. In the first place, this asceticism involves the denial of the sexual impulse, which, as we have seen, is the deepest and strongest manifestation of the will to live. Secondly, through its fastings and its other mortifications of the flesh, it signifies the denial of individual life as the pursuit of an illusory pleasure. Lastly, in its self-denying charity, asceticism recognises and follows the one line of duty possible to those who thus renounce the aims of life, namely, the alleviation of others' sufferings. Schopenhauer thinks that this view of asceticism supplies for the first time 'in the abstract, and free from all that

is mythical, the inner nature of holiness, self-denial, and asceticism.'

The other way Schopenhauer seeks to make clear what he means by denial of will to live is by contrasting it with the impulse of suicide. This, he says, 'is so far from being a denial of will to live, that it is a phenomenon due to strong affirmation of will.' The denial of will essentially means 'the shunning not of the sufferings but of the pleasures of life.' The self-murderer really wills to live; he wills 'the unimpeded existence and affirmation of the body.' Only external circumstances do not allow of his gaining his end. Hence his misery and his flight from an existence which has become insupportable. Besides, the suicide is taking thought for the individual only, whereas complete denial of will involves a consideration of the species also.

On the other hand, Schopenhauer allows that a gradual undermining of health and a hastening of death by a voluntary process of abstention and self-mortification is of the very nature of denial of will to live. 'It appears,' he says, 'that the total denial of will to live can reach the stage in which there fails even the will that is needful to the maintenance of the vegetable functions of the body through the reception of nutriment.' Such a fully resigned ascetic differs *toto cœlo* from the suicide, since he ceases to live solely because he has wholly ceased to will. Death by hunger is the only conceivable form which springs out of the denial of will, since all other modes must involve the design of shortening the pangs of life; that is to say, a degree of the affirmation of will.

Schopenhauer speaks of this state of non-willing, which he regards as the highest attainable possession of our race, as one of peace, if not of quiet joy. In truth, he describes

this condition in much the same terms as the Stoics were wont to describe that of the wise man.

'He in whom the denial of will to live is brought about, however poor, joyless, and full of wants his condition may be when seen from without, is full of inner joyousness, and true heavenly rest. It is not the restless impulse of life, the jubilant joy, which has violent suffering as its necessary antecedent or consequent, such as makes up the course of life of the *bon vivant* (*lebenslustiger Mensch*); but it is an imperturbable peace, a deep repose, an inner cheerfulness, a condition which cannot be seen without the greatest longing, being that which is alone right, infinitely surpassing all besides' (i. p. 461).

Still, in spite of this promise of a final peace, the outlook on the world and life which Schopenhauer's whole philosophy affords us is sufficiently dark. Life is incurably bad, and is not to be accepted on any conditions. The one remedy for human woes is to abandon life, to reduce ourselves to passive spectators of the world, caring nothing for its interests, or its endeavours. And though Schopenhauer describes this perfectly neutral condition as one of peace, he admits that it can only be reached and maintained by dint of long and painful struggle.

Nor is this all; it seems to follow from Schopenhauer's conception of will that no number of such denials as he here describes can have any effect on the will as a whole. He is never weary of telling us that it is the unalterable nature of will to strive, and in one place he says that the visible world, being but the mirror of the real world, must accompany it as inseparably as the shadow the body which projects it. He tells us this, moreover, when arguing against the fear of death as though this were the destruction

of anything more than a phenomenon (i. 324). How this constant activity of the will as a whole is to be reconciled with a quiescence of will in the individual (which is, after all, the reality itself in one of its manifestations) I do not propose to consider here.

Pessimism of the most pronounced character is thus the conclusion of our author's line of thought, nor does he omit to tell us this explicitly. In a characteristic denunciation of optimism 'which cuts so odd a figure that one is inclined to look on it as irony,' he expressly affirms the direct and logical contrary of Leibnitz's well-known proposition. The world is the worst among all possible ones. For the possible is that which can actually exist and persist. Now the present world is so arranged as just to be able to exist; were it a little worse, it could no longer subsist at all. 'The world is as bad as it possibly can be in order to exist anyhow.' In proof of this rather astounding declaration, he traces what he considers would be the consequences if the actions of the destructive natural forces were slightly more terrible than they actually are.

Yet it looks as if the human mind were unable to frame a theory of life absolutely bare of consolation, and even Schopenhauer may be found offering a kind of dreary solace to those who are likely to be dismayed by his doleful story. He also, no less than the optimist Leibnitz, will have his theodicy, and a curious thing this is. Since all life, all the visible world, is the direct product of will, and this will is free and almighty, it alone is responsible for the evil of existence. Thus there reigns an eternal justice in the world, the punishment being so bound up with the crime that both are one and the same. Consequently there is no room for complaint. Though we are all something

which ought not to be, yet the perfect adjustment of punishment to crime stamps the world with a moral rightness which silences all our vain protests.

Schopenhauer may be said to drop us another crumb of consolation when he tells us that his doctrine tends to remove the fear of death. Death, he says, only touches the phenomenal part of us, not our inmost reality. This, which is will, persists in spite of all the coming and passing of individual life. Again, 'the terrors of death rest for the most part on the false appearance that at that moment the ego disappears while the world remains. The opposite, however, is rather the truth: the world disappears, whereas the inmost kernel of the ego, the bearer and begetter of that subject in whose representation alone the world had its existence, persists.'

These considerations, together with those of the occasional delight attainable in the contemplation of art and the repose enjoyed when the will ceases to throb with unquenchable desire, are the only relief to the blackness of Schopenhauer's picture of life, and it will be seen at once that they do not amount to much. The world is still the worst world possible, even though out of this worst we may be able, thanks to an unquenchable instinct, to squeeze a drop or two of consolatory reflection.

CHAPTER V.

THE GERMAN PESSIMISTS. SCHOPENHAUER'S SUCCESSORS: HARTMANN, ETC.

SCHOPENHAUER'S philosophy remained for some time without much visible effect on the minds of his countrymen, the influence of Hegel being still too strong. Of late years, however, Schopenhauer's writings have received a compensatory amount of attention, and the pessimist seems now to have established something like a school in Germany.

Among the disciples of this school, few, if any, are content to accept their master's system in the shape in which he left it. They all depart more or less from some of Schopenhauer's leading positions. In some cases this divergence touches the character of the pessimism which Schopenhauer deduces from his first principles; in other cases this element is retained in its integrity.

Among those who represent Schopenhauer's characteristic estimate of the world, and who accept without qualification his condemnation of existence, Julius Bahnsen stands out conspicuously.[1] Nay, it may be said that this writer vies with his master in his delineation of the misery of life.

[1] Bahnsen's views are to be found in a little work entitled 'Zur Philosophie der Geschichte.' This is principally directed against Hartmann's rehabilitation of the Hegelian factor of intellect in the world-order.

It is true that he separates himself from Schopenhauer in certain particulars of his system. Thus he rejects the Kantian idealism of his teacher, conceiving the substantial will at the basis of the world as a plurality, not as a unity. In other words, he leans more to the pluralism of Herbart than to the monism of Spinoza or Hegel. Yet this difference does not involve the practical deduction which Schopenhauer draws from his conception of will. To Bahnsen, as to Schopenhauer, the world is a ceaseless self-tormenting of the absolute.

Nay, more, Bahnsen carries out some of Schopenhauer's principles with greater rigour than their author, and, by denying consistently the co-operation of reason in the world, he rejects the only kind of pure delight retained by Schopenhauer, that of intellectual contemplation. Since, according to Bahnsen, intelligent order and harmony of design are wholly absent from the universe,[1] the scientific observation of the world and the representation of it in the creations of art, so far from being a source of quiet joy, can only bring anguish to the logical and philosophic mind. Even the hope of a final annihilation of existence which, as we shall presently see, is held out by Hartmann, is to Bahnsen an illusion. There being no intellectual factor in the universe, and nothing but 'will rending itself in an eternal self-partition (*Selbst-entzweiung*) to endless torment,' the badness of the world is final and unalterable. 'Enough,' he writes, 'so far as our senses, our search, our thought, our speculative grubbing (*Grübeln*), reach, we obtain nothing but a vain moaning in the world and no prospect of release.' In Bahnsen, says Huber, the idealism of German philosophy,

[1] Bahnsen expresses this by saying the order of events manifests no logical nexus, but is simply a 'real-dialectic' process.

the affirmation of reason or intelligence as the principle of the universe, is completely extinguished, so that we may be sure of seeing here the final development of pessimism.

Bahnsen, however, stands almost alone in this maintenance of Schopenhauer's extreme pessimism. Among those who have sought to tone down its harsher features, one must include the disciple who has done most to expound and enforce Schopenhauer's doctrine: I refer to Frauenstädt. In expounding and defending Schopenhauer's views in his well-known 'Briefe,' he seeks to modify the form, if not the matter, of his master's system in several particulars. Thus he tries to put in the background the subjective idealism of Schopenhauer, which he regards as the result of early studies under the influence of Kant. Frauenstädt goes beyond Schopenhauer, too, in erecting unconscious intellectual representation into a concomitant of will, as manifesting itself more particularly in the organic world. Once more, through the rejection of Schopenhauer's subjective idealism, he is able to give a greater reality to the historical order of events, and he distinctly affirms that 'history presents to us an end, a determining and ruling plan under the form of historical development.' Lastly, he tries to soften the harsh lines of Schopenhauer's pessimism, and even denies that the term pessimist is applicable to one whose cosmic system admits the possibility of the negation of will and its torments.

This tendency to admit the fact of the world's inseparable misery, and yet to find within the limits of a consistent pessimism sources of consolation, shows itself more distinctly in two other writers, namely, Hartmann, of whom I shall speak presently, and Taubert. The latter[1] accepts

[1] Taubert's views are contained in a little work entitled 'Der Pessimismus und seine Gegner.'

Schopenhauer's doctrine, that with progress there comes a growing recognition of the unreality of happiness, and of the sufferings of existence, but lays great emphasis on the possibility of a considerable triumph over this misery, through the combined struggle of mankind. In this way, absolute peace may be reached, or at least the bane of the will to live greatly reduced. This combination of forces, would have as one of its results the subjugation of the selfish propensities, by means of which a large amount of the suffering would at once be eliminated.

'The much decried cheerlessness of pessimism,' he writes, 'transforms itself on closer inspection into one of the greatest consolations which are offered to mankind; for not only does it transport the individual beyond every suffering to which he is destined, it also increases the pleasures which exist and doubles our enjoyment. It is true that it shows us the illusory character of every joy, but it does not thereby touch pleasure itself, but simply encloses it in a dark frame which makes the picture stand out with the greater advantage.'

Taubert lays much weight on the value of intellectual enjoyments as recognised by pessimism, 'which it places, like images of gods eternally illuminating, free from regret, on the dreary background of the sufferings of life and the joys which constantly end in pains.'

Taubert reads very much like an optimist who has made a mistake by stumbling into a system of pessimistic philosophy, and who vainly strives to extricate himself from the treacherous bog.

There is one other successor of Schopenhauer who seeks to escape from the latter's extreme pessimism, namely, Edward von Hartmann. This writer has done so much to

give a new form to the whole philosophy of Schopenhauer, and has worked out the ontological problem in so full and systematic a shape, that it behoves us to examine his views at some length.

It is, indeed, a question how far Hartmann is to be regarded as a disciple of Schopenhauer. According to his own opinion, his system is only very loosely connected with that of his predecessor.[1] Yet, though it must be conceded that Hartmann has modified much, and given a new appearance to certain parts of Schopenhauer's scheme, his system can hardly be called an independent construction. It is, strictly speaking, a development of Schopenhauer's main ideas with a readjustment of these in new relations of proportion, and with the addition of a few elements drawn from other philosophers, namely, Schelling and Hegel. In any case he accepts Schopenhauer's view of life as misery, and recommends the denial of the will to live as the one out-look for humanity. It is true he gives a new form to this denial of will; yet in Hartmann's system, as in that of Schopenhauer, abandonment of life is the only ultimate resort for rational men.[2]

Before entering into the particulars of Hartmann's system, it may be well, as in the case of Schopenhauer, to present to the reader a slight sketch of the writer's life.

From a short autobiography recently published by

[1] For a recent statement of his relation to Schopenhauer, see a review of Frauenstädt's 'Neue Briefe' in the 'Revue Philosophique,' June and July 1876.

[2] Zeller remarks that 'it is only a subordinate point of difference between Hartmann's and Schopenhauer's systems, that the pessimistic view of life (common to the two) stands out less energetically in Hartmann than in his predecessor.'

Hartmann under the title 'My Course of Development' ('Mein Entwickelungsgang')[1] we may gather the following facts respecting his life and education.

Carl Robert Edward von Hartmann (the first two prænomina are not used by the writer) was born at Berlin in the year 1842. His father was a captain in the Prussian Artillery. Edward was the only child, and, being naturally precocious, readily acquired an old-fashioned manner of thought and expression. He went through the excellent school course of the Prussian Gymnasia, not, however, with very much enjoyment. The youth's precocity is well illustrated by the fact that he was able to see, even at this age, the one-sidedness and narrowness of much of school tuition. He felt school to be 'a pressing burden,' and rebelled 'against a system of instruction that was in many particulars a clear waste of time.' The hour in which he left school was 'perhaps, the happiest of his life.' One reason of this curious oppressiveness of school life was clearly the want of pleasant companionships. Hartmann speaks of his comrades as looking on him as something uncanny, largely because of his freedom from all sentiments of piety towards authority. He had no great love for classical studies. Homer, he thinks, fails to delight boys (?), because the scholar, with his modern culture, appears so far elevated above the naïve poet. Mathematics and natural science (what amount of the latter was studied is not mentioned) were his favourite

[1] These papers first appeared in the 'Gegenwart,' 1875, and have since been republished among the author's 'Gesammelte Studien und Aufsätze gemeinverständlichen Inhalts.' The writer of an exceedingly interesting article on 'The Philosophy of Pessimism,' in the 'Westminster Review' of January 1876, reproduces one or two common rumours respecting Hartmann's life which this autobiography plainly contradicts.

pursuits. The real sources of pleasure in this apparently unjoyous existence were English novels, and, later on, the pursuit of music and painting, in each of which branches of art he attained considerable progress.

On leaving school, Hartmann was in a good deal of doubt respecting a profession. He shrank from the prospect of a university career on account of the coarseness and vulgarity of student life. (One would like to know how many German Gymnasiasts are troubled by similar scruples.) He was not sufficiently sure of a first-rate success to take up as a calling either of his favourite arts or natural science. He decided for the army, believing that by becoming a soldier he could best become 'a whole man.' His mathematical and physical studies, moreover, drew him more especially to the department of artillery. In 1858 he joined a regiment of artillery as cadet, and began to attend the lectures and exercises of the artillery school. His new life appears to have been more congenial to him than his school experiences, though it is clear that he found but little sympathy in his special aims among his light-hearted comrades. He secured ample time for reading, which embraced works on philosophy, natural science, and æsthetical subjects. His philosophical reading, which now became more and more the absorbing interest of his leisure, was carried on at first in a desultory, afterwards in a more systematic, fashion. For the most part, he tells us, he was led by a certain natural instinct in finding out what was of value in philosophical literature; yet he had the guidance of some medical friends in the perusal of works on psychology and natural science.

Still more remarkable than his early appetite for philosophic literature was his precocious impulse to think out

metaphysical problems for himself. He tells us that in his thirteenth year he had begun to jot down thoughts, questions, doubts, and aphorisms, and that at the close of his gymnasium course (in his seventeenth year) he composed his 'first connected work,' under the title 'Reflections on Mind,' in which he discussed, *inter alia*, the problems of a future state, free-will, &c. During the first years of his military career (1858–1863) his professional duties left him too little time for philosophical production. In 1863, he tells us, he laid down some of the fundamental pillars of his philosophical system, including the reconciliation of pessimism and optimism, and the justification of the teleological method.

In the winter of 1861–2 his military studies were interrupted by a disorder in the knee, which, as it grew worse, necessitating long absences at baths, finally compelled him to relinquish his career. He left the artillery school in the year 1862, and fully gave up his profession in 1864. The malady from which he suffered has remained a local one, not impairing his general health, and has now considerably abated.

After some further thoughts of taking up the art of painting or of musical composition as an avocation, Hartmann decided to throw himself into philosophy,[1] and towards the end of the year 1864 he had already begun his 'Philosophy of the Unconscious.' In this, as in earlier productions, he went to work, he says, impelled only by a

[1] One almost admires Hartmann's frank vanity, when he tells us that at this time 'he knew that in his past twenty-two years he had experienced more, triumphed over more errors, got rid of more prejudices, and seen through more illusions, than many cultivated men are allowed to do in their whole life.'

desire to satisfy his own intellectual cravings for truth, and by no consideration of external consequences. He attaches much importance to the fact that his productions were not controlled by 'any external ends, whether personal or material.' In this respect, he adds—'The "Philosophy of the Unconscious" is specifically distinguished from most productions of the modern philosophic book-market, which serve either as a ground-work for an intended university examination, or as a means of gaining a professorship, or as a confirmation of a professorial reputation, or finally as a literary investment.'

He also congratulates himself, in terms which perhaps hardly seem suitable, at least to English taste, that this work was undertaken in perfect isolation from professional circles, and what he styles the philosophy of the guild (*Zunftphilosophie*).[1] The perfect originality and independence of his speculations are vouched for, he thinks, by the fact that among his friends there was none with whom he could hold a conversation 'of any philosophical complexion.'

By the year 1867 the work was completed, though it was not published till 1869.[2] The author concludes his autobiography by giving his reason for not substantially changing the first draft of his system in later editions, and by meeting the suspicion that his pessimistic proclivities are due to a gloomy personal experience by means of a pleasant

[1] Hartmann is frequently styled Doctor, and Erdmann, in his 'Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie,' says he took his doctorate at the Berlin University in the year 1867. But Hartmann does not mention this, and, moreover, seems never to have assumed the title.

[2] It may be interesting to compare Hartmann's age with those of two other young metaphysicians when they published their first great work. Berkeley was twenty-five when the 'New Theory of Vision' appeared; the 'Treatise of Human Nature' was published when Hume was twenty-six.

little sketch of his home life, lit up with the presence of a sympathetic wife, of a beautiful engaging boy, 'just experimenting with the joining together of verbs and nouns,' and of a few congenial friends.

With this knowledge of the author's character and history, let us look into his ponderous treatise on 'Philosophy of the Unconscious,' in order to study more in detail its main features and fundamental ideas.[1]

In the introduction Herr von Hartmann gives us a fairly clear notion of the aim of his volume. Setting out with a quotation from Kant as to the existence of mental representations or ideas (*Vorstellungen*) of which we are not conscious, the author seeks to define his fundamental conception of an unconscious mental process which presents itself now as volition (as in instinct), now as intellectual representation or idea (as in many forms of memory). It is added that the metaphysical conception of the Unconscious, which is to include both unconscious will and unconscious idea, is positive as well as negative, by right of the two attributes, volition and representation.

The author further discusses the right method of speculation. He complains that science has remained too confined and *borné*, through want of a metaphysical interpretation of its conclusions; while philosophy, by employing only the deductive method, has remained thin and unsubstantial, and incapable of connecting itself with the fruits of empirical research. The proper method is to combine the two, by seeking 'to connect according to the inductive

[1] The references in this *précis* of Hartmann's system are to the sixth edition of the work in one volume. Since this was written a new edition has appeared in two volumes, which simply differs from the earlier ones in the addition of some supplementary scientific matter at the end.

method the speculative principles' (which have been first arrived at by a kind of 'leap in the air of a mystic nature') 'with the highest attained results of inductive science.'

After a review of what he calls his predecessors in philosophy and in science in reference to the notion of the Unconscious, and a highly curious section on the mode in which we accept the existence of ends or aims in nature, the writer enters on the first of the three main divisions of his work, namely, that which discusses the manifestations of the Unconscious in organic and principally in animal bodies. This part, as well as the succeeding one, professes to be a rigorous scientific investigation of facts, and serves to form the empirical basis of the metaphysical theory of the Unconscious. The drift of this investigation is, that everywhere in the processes of organic life the action of unconscious will and intelligence is distinctly recognisable. This is shown to hold good in the region of the functions of the spinal column and sympathetic ganglia, in voluntary and reflex movements, in instinct, in the recuperative processes of the organism, and finally in the formation and growth of organic structure. Under these heads the writer collects from a large number of different sources a host of curious and interesting facts, which, in his view, clearly point to the operations of unconscious will and idea as their only adequate cause. Without trying to follow him in detail, we may just glance at one or two examples of his mode of reasoning from these biological phenomena.

For example, Hartmann quotes a good many well-known facts which go to show that there are certain movements carried on by the lower centres in the spinal column and medulla oblongata quite independently of the brain. Thus, a hen, from which Flourens removed the whole of the

cerebrum, stuck its head under its wing on going to sleep, and on waking shook itself and arranged its feathers with its beak. (The writer can scarcely mean that only the column and the medulla were concerned in these actions.) From these facts he reasons, as Mr. Lewes and others have done, that animals have more than one consciousness; namely, a cerebral consciousness which is the animal's self, and detached consciousnesses connected with the lower centres. In other words, there exist in our bodily organisms distinct wills, which, as far as we, the higher consciousnesses, are concerned, are *unconscious*.

But more, not only can lower centres of consciousness be proved to exist in the animal organism, we may detect the presence of distinct mental elements which do not enter as factors either into the higher cerebral consciousness or into the lower ganglionic consciousnesses. This is shown in the execution of voluntary movements. When I wish to lift my little finger, says Hartmann, the molecular vibrations which sustain this mental state (Hartmann calls it a representation) are located in the cerebrum, and cannot, therefore, act directly on the extremities of the motor nerves which lead to the muscles of the finger, since these are seated in the medulla or cerebellum. Nor is it possible to explain by mechanical processes the transference of these cerebral vibrations to the motor nerves. Hence there must be an intermediate psychical process which is evidently an unconscious one. In consequence of the conscious intention to lift the finger there arises an unconscious intention to excite the point P where the motor nerves end. This intention, moreover, clearly involves the presence of an unconscious mental representation, namely, that of the point P; consequently, 'every voluntary movement pre-

supposes the unconscious representation of the position of the corresponding nervous terminations in the brain' (p. 67).

In the phenomena of instinct, Hartmann finds a much wider field for this action of unconscious mind. Instinctive actions cannot, he thinks, be explained as conscious processes, carried out with conscious intention. The rapidity and certainty with which they are executed sharply mark them off from the clearly conscious actions of the same limited minds, these actions being always slow, hesitating, and awkward. Nor can they be explained on any mechanical theory of nervous structure and nervous action as purely material processes. They clearly involve *mental* processes; and since these are not conscious—not even elements of a presumable lower isolated consciousness in a less complex ganglionic centre—they must result from a will and an intelligent conception which are in every sense unconscious.

This unconscious intelligent will, though not having any definite material basis or seat in the organism, like the conscious will of the cerebrum and the wills of the lower centres, is nevertheless to be regarded as belonging to the individual. It springs 'out of the innermost nature and character' of the individual. The aim of each of these instincts 'is not thought out by some foreign mind outside the individual as a Providence . . . . but is willed in every case by the individual, only unconsciously' (p. 97). Under instinct, it may be added, the author renders very prominent all cases of animal prevision in which there seem to be no sources from which the creature could derive its information. Thus the migration of birds cannot be accounted for as the result of a sensation at the time, but clearly involves a forecasting of future atmospheric changes. This presentiment Hartmann calls a clairvoyance

(*Hellsehen*), and he considers the alleged facts of human clairvoyance to be of precisely the same nature.

In his account of the recuperative forces of the organism, and of the processes of organic growth, the author seeks to trace in a yet wider region the action of unconscious will and intelligence in the bodily organism. Disease is a disturbance of the organism by some external force, and recovery is the result of a voluntary act of 'an individual providence' deliberately aiming at the result reached. Similarly, growth cannot be accounted for as a pure result of mechanical laws, but is seen to involve the action of a will.

The result of this first part seems to be, that in the processes of animal life there shows itself, in addition to the will of which the individual is conscious, other quasi-conscious wills correlated with the lower nervous centres, and, further, a wholly unconscious will, which can only be defined as a kind of tutelary spirit or providence of the individual, and which seems to be capable of making good a number of deficiencies of conscious will and intelligence, and of originating a large number of actions and changes in the organism, being limited only by certain material conditions which are not very clearly stated.

In the second part, Hartmann proceeds to illustrate the revelations of the Unconscious in the human mind as the second great region in which the empirical results of this principle are to be looked for. In a somewhat loose arrangement of subjects, the author here passes under review what he deems to be the unconscious elements in sexual love, in feeling generally, in character and morality, in æsthetic judgment and artistic creation, in mysticism, in history, &c. In all these regions the author thinks he dis-

covers the action of mind behind mind, of unconscious intention behind conscious intention, just as in the first part he recognised the presence of will, other than that of consciousness, behind the material processes of the animal organism.

In his account of the amatory passion, Hartmann follows Schopenhauer very closely, both in his mode of viewing the subject, and in his style of presentation. Men seek sexual indulgence in the illusion that they thus reach a measure of pleasure not otherwise attainable. This is explained by saying that what they will is not the indulgence but the act of generation; and it is this unconscious purpose, or blind instinctive impulse, which gives reality and force to the delights of courtship, and to the charm of an opposed or rather a complementary nature in the object of love.

Hartmann's account of the manifestations of the Unconscious in pleasure and pain generally is extremely curious. Pleasures and pains are perfectly homogeneous states, differing in quantity only. What then is the one simple cause of these phenomena? It is an error to take feeling as primary, and to regard desire (*Begehren*), as the mere representation of future pleasure. The correct mode of viewing the subject is to make will the primary, and to resolve all pleasure into satisfaction of will. This is proved in two ways: firstly, will, as instinct, exists, as a matter of fact, prior to the representation of pleasure; secondly, it is not possible to resolve all will into representation of pleasure, whereas it is possible to resolve all pleasure into satisfaction of will. This is done of course by help of the hypothesis of unconscious volition and representation.

Hartmann supplements the account of pleasure and pain drawn from conscious mental life by the two following

propositions, derived from 'The Psychology of the Unconscious'; firstly, 'When we are not conscious of any volition, in the satisfaction (or non-satisfaction) of which a present pleasure or pain might consist, the will concerned is an unconscious one; and secondly, the obscure, inexpressible, ineffable element in our feelings, lies in the unconsciousness of the accompanying representations.'

As an example of the first, the pleasure which results from nervous stimulation is found to be connected, according to Lotze (and one may add Mr. Bain), with a furtherance of the organic functions, the pain with a disturbance of these functions. This is manifestly the satisfaction of the unconscious will which effects the maintenance of the individual organism.

The action of unconscious representations in our pleasures is seen in the changing moods of which we can give no clear account. The sudden joys and depressions of children point to unconscious representations correlated with the lower ganglionic centres. This action of unconscious representation, though showing itself most plainly in the feelings of the lower animals, presents itself in a striking manner in the phenomena of hysteria, the feelings resulting from the changes at puberty, &c.

The play of the unconscious in other regions of mental life can only just be alluded to. Hartmann, though affirming the real existence of the external world and of space, accepts the empiricist's view of the genesis of our space notions through a synthesis of muscular and other feelings, and leaning on Helmholtz's notion of unconscious inferences (*Schlüsse*), seeks to show that this synthesis lies outside consciousness. Language, again, exhibits the same principle, for human speech is too large and complicated a growth to

be the product of a single mind, while it is too much of an organic unity to be due to the conscious actions of many. Once more, mysticism (under which must be understood not only the spiritual vision of religionists, but also clairvoyance and even metaphysical intuition) illustrates the existence of the Unconscious. The object or content of mystical thought is nothing reached by experience, but a revelation from the sphere of the Unconscious. Finally, in history, which Hartmann conceives after Hegel as an evolution of thought and of an intelligible plan, the same thing is observable. After reviewing the several factors in social and historical development, including the growth of society, the formation of the state and of the church, the operations of industry, &c., he concludes as follows: 'If we are unable to ignore in this totality of evolution, one uniting plan, a clear, prescribed end, towards which all steps of development are striving; if, on the other hand, we must concede that the separate actions which prepared or brought about these stages were by no means prompted by any consciousness of these ends, but that men almost always strove after and realised something else, we must also recognise that something else besides the conscious intention of individuals, or the accidental combination of single actions, works concealed in history. This "something else" is Schiller's far-reaching glance, which discovers from afar where the self-seeking aims of the individuals result unconsciously in a fulfilment of the whole.'

By the end of the second part, then, Hartmann claims to have made out that the presence of unconscious yet intelligent will is distinctly traceable both in the region of material processes and in that of conscious activity. With this inductive basis he is satisfied, and proceeds in the third

part, under the title, 'The Metaphysic of the Unconscious,' to define and deduce the consequences of the principle of the Unconscious—as the all-pervading ontological reality. Into many of the subtle metaphysical points discussed in this somewhat miscellaneous section of the work we need not enter. It may be sufficient to point to a few of the most striking and interesting features.

The great task which Hartmann confronts in a metaphysic of unconscious will is to show the relation of his principle to matter as real existence, and to work out the metaphysical process by which this matter slowly reaches the forms of organic life, and finally of a life which sustains a consciousness.

Matter, says Hartmann, consists, according to the latest physical hypothesis, exclusively of innumerable atomic forces grouped together in certain ways. These forces, or points of force, are either positive or negative, attractive or repellent. Each atomic force is a striving, and what is this? 'What, then, is the striving of the atomic force besides will, that striving whose content or object is formed by the unconscious representation of that which is striven after?' (p. 478). The activities of the atomic forces are simply individual acts of volition. Thus easily is matter resolved into will and idea, and the radical difference supposed to exist between matter and mind effaced. The identity of the two is now no longer an inconceivable postulate or a product of mystic conception, but 'is elevated to a scientific cognition.'

Next as to the evolution of organic life. He conceives the process of organic development to be distinctly willed and intended by the Unconscious, the object aimed at being a higher and still higher degree of life. But how are we to conceive this 'organising Unconscious'? Is it simply the

sum of the individual acts of will supplied by the forces of the atoms of matter? In other words, is organic evolution a mechanical process explicable by the known laws of material processes? Hartmann is very clear on this point. The Unconscious in organic evolution is something quite apart from the material forces or volitions implied in bodily changes. It is a will enlightened by an intelligence which presides over these, which every now and then *interferes with* their action by introducing a new element. At the same time it makes full use of these mechanical forces. Thus it lays hold, so to speak, of all kinds of mechanical contrivances which happen to have been developed by previous exertions of the Unconscious, in order to save itself unnecessary labour, and to reduce the results of its interference to 'material minimum effects' (*sic*). For example, Hartmann conceives that the Unconscious makes use of certain 'dispositions' or tendencies in the two kinds of material which combine in the act of reproduction, 'which tendencies enable these materials to develop more easily in the direction prescribed by the parental organisms than in any other direction.' If the Unconscious saw any reason for interposing here, so as to counteract this mechanical tendency, it would do so; but since there is no such reason, so far as the preservation of the type is concerned, we find that it does not interpose, but that 'the begotten resembles the begettors' (pp. 585–6).

This conception of an unconscious will (over and above the mere volitions of the bodily atoms) whose action cannot be reduced to a mechanical operation, is brought out with great prominence in the author's discussion of Darwinism.[1]

[1] Hartmann has devoted fuller space to Darwin's hypothesis in a volume entitled 'Wahrheit und Irrthum im Darwinismus.'

Hartmann admits the action of individual variation, natural selection, and inheritance, but, appealing to objections raised by Mr. Wallace and Professor Nägeli, he thinks these processes are wholly inadequate to account for the progress of animal life. Natural selection explains, he thinks, only the development and transformation of existing organs into some new '*physiological* arrangement' demanded by the circumstances of the time; it is impotent to account for a properly *morphological* change. The main part of the development, both of plants and of animals, is due to the direct action of the organising Unconscious. What Darwin's principle represents is simply the action of certain mechanical arrangements which the Unconscious finds, so to speak, ready prepared for it, and wisely makes use of. Hartmann lays down a number of principles, which he thinks fully explain the processes of organic evolution. Among these we find the following, which will illustrate the author's conception of his subject. 'The Unconscious makes use of the individual deviations which arise accidentally in every process of generation, in so far as these present themselves in those directions which answer to its aim.'

Let us now see what Hartmann makes of the genesis of consciousness in this system of things. The points of contrast between consciousness and the Unconscious are said to be such as these: Consciousness is capable of becoming diseased and exhausted, while the Unconscious is not subject to these drawbacks. The one has duration and involves memory, while the other is timeless. The first is liable to error, the second infallible. Again, consciousness is necessarily conditioned by the presence of a material brain or nervous ganglia. On this point, Hartmann, like Schopenhauer, fully goes with the materialists. The final

point of difference between the Unconscious and consciousness is, that while in the former will and intellectual representation are inseparable, in the latter the idea may become detached from the volition. Consciousness is thus a possibility of the emancipation of the intellectual from the volitional. The following is the process by which consciousness as emancipated intellectual representation arises:—

'The representation has no interest in its own existence, no endeavour to reach it; consequently, so long as there is no consciousness, it is only called forth by the will, and the unconscious mind can only have such representations as, being called into being by the will, form the content of the will. Here organised matter suddenly breaks in on the peace of the Unconscious, and forces on the astonished individual mind, during the necessary reaction of sensation, a representation which falls on it as out of heaven, for it finds in itself no will for this representation. . . . . The great revolution has come to pass, the first step in the redemption of the world is taken, the idea is snatched away from the will in order to confront it in the future as an independent might, in order to subject that power of which it has been the slave' (p. 394).

Otherwise expressed, 'the representation impregnated from without works as a motive on the will,' and calls forth an act of negation from the same. 'The shock or start (*Stutzen*) is the moment of origin of this negating will, the sudden momentary entrance of the opposition of the will.' But since the opposing will is too weak to carry out fully this negation, it remains a fainting will devoid of satisfaction, and so laden with pain, which is thus an inseparable concomitant of every genesis of consciousness.

If it be asked how matter can thus effect an irruption

into the unconscious individual mind, the answer is found in the truth that matter itself is but a form of will (atomic). Sensation and consciousness thus arise through a collision or conflict of wills just as matter itself arises through the intersection and opposition of two or more atomic wills. It is only when 'the radiating will' finds a resistance issuing from something homogeneous, namely, another will, in collision with which it starts or breaks, that it is able to produce 'the objective phenomenon of existence, and the subjective phenomenon of consciousness.'

Unconscious wills of individual organisms, atomic wills in inorganic nature—these conceptions appear to point to a final solution of the problem of being by a form of pluralism somewhat akin to Leibnitz's theory of monads and Herbart's doctrine of simple beings. But Hartmann's views resemble rather those of Spinoza and later philosophers who postulate one comprehensive ultimate substance. His theory is distinctly termed a form of *Monism*, which recognises but one substance or ultimate reality. All these varieties of will are, he tells us, but different functions of one and the same substance. First of all, it is plain that the unconscious minds of the same individual are all one, else there could not be 'that wonderful harmony of the organism.' Further, it must be supposed that the unconscious minds of different individuals are the same, and the fixed belief in the opposite is only an illusion of the practical instinct which continually cries 'I, I.' Finally, the atomic wills of inorganic matter are to be conceived as manifestations of the same metaphysical entity.

If, however, the ultimate reality is essentially one, what, it may be asked, becomes of the plurality of wills in matter and mind, of which Hartmann is constantly speaking? This

multiplicity is not a mere appearance, due to the subjective forms of space and time, as with Schopenhauer, and it has to be accounted for in another way. This Hartmann attempts to do by means of a peculiar theory of individuation. He here mediates between Kant and Schopenhauer on the one side, and Herbart on the other. Multiformity and individuality belong to all reality—so far Herbart is right,—but then all reality, all existence, is phenomenal. On the other hand, Kant and Schopenhauer are wrong in saying that this 'phenomenality' of existence is purely subjective. 'The philosophy of the Unconscious is the true reconciliation of monism and pluralistic individualism,' and it becomes so in the following manner.

'Individuals are objectively posited phenomena, that is, willed thoughts of the Unconscious or definite volitions of the same; the Unity of being remains unaltered by the plurality of individuals, which are only activities (or combinations of certain activities) of the one being.' Time and space have thus an objective (phenomenal) reality, being the forms of this activity of the one being, though not of course applicable to this being itself.

Hartmann concludes the metaphysical groundwork of his doctrine, by seeking to give a precise logical definition of his ultimate principle. He first of all points out the relation of his theory to those of previous metaphysicians, more especially Hegel and Schopenhauer. He then proceeds to define the inner essence of will. All volition is an act which has a potence or power,[1] namely, will, as its foundation. The will as noumenon, considered apart from its activity in the world and lying outside time, is free, as

[1] The term 'potence' (*Potenz*) has much the same significance with Hartmann as with Schelling.

Schopenhauer asserts. It includes within itself the two possibilities of willing and not willing. It follows from this that all reality (or activity of will), namely, the cosmic process itself, is limited backwards, the point of commencement being 'the limiting point between time and timeless eternity.' How Hartmann makes use of this same idea to open up a prospect of release from existence, will be shown by-and-by.

From this extra-temporal condition of pure potency, the will passes into that of activity in time through an intermediate stage, namely, that of empty volition. This is the moment of Initiative, though it must not be conceived as a temporal interval between the repose of potency and the activity of real existence. This condition of empty willing is so far real as it is a wrestling for actuality, and a struggling of the will to realise itself as form. It is an eternal pining (*Schmachten*) for fulfilment, and is thus 'absolute unblessedness, torment without pleasure, even without pause.'

How then does the cosmic process arise out of this eternal state of empty willing? Through the co-operation of the other factor of existence, namely, the unconscious intellectual representation or idea. We have then to think of this element as co-existing with will outside the limits of time. We must not imagine this condition of the eternal idea as existence, since existence begins with actuality in time. Like the eternal condition of the will it is 'super-existent.' Nor can the idea be conceived as a power (potence) of existence, for this is the exclusive prerogative of will. Finally, this extra-temporal condition of the idea is not non-existence. Hartmann admits that language is wanting to express this condition, though it may be best characterised as 'latent existence.'

Such being the state of things in the eternity that lies beyond and before all time, reality or the world begins through a curious combination of will and idea. The will as empty form requires some definite content, and this can only be supplied by the intellectual representation. We must conceive this action as a drawing forth and seizing of the representation on the part of the will, or as a yielding of itself up to the will on the part of the idea, which last is wholly passive involving no positive activity. Will and representation are thus related as the male and the female. 'Out of this embrace of the two super-existent principles, the potency of existence deciding for existence, and the purely existent, existence is created.'

It follows that within the limits of existence, that is, in the order of the actual world, both will and idea or reason play a discoverable part, and the recognition of these functions throws a new light on what we mean by uniformity or the logical aspect of the Universe. The idea, he tells us, represents the logical; the will, which simply strives, and of itself knows not how to attain, the illogical. At the same time, both are included under the notion of causality. '*That* the stone which I let fall falls, depends on the continuation of volition to the present moment; but that it *falls*, and with a certain velocity, lies in the nature of the logical.' Causality is thus conceived 'as logical necessity, which receives actuality through the will.' End or aim is accordingly the positive side of the logical, and we may adopt the proposition of Leibnitz, *causæ efficientes pendent a causis finalibus.* Logical necessity is the universal, and causality and finality, to which motivation (of will) may be added, are only 'different projections' in which this universal presents itself when considered from

different points of view. In this way Hartmann thinks he reinstates the teleological principle as necessarily involved in the logical view of the order of the world.

Hartmann concludes the transcendental determination of his principle by an attempt to show its agreement with Spinoza's single substance and its two attributes.

It is now time to pass to Hartmann's estimate of the value of life as deduced from his metaphysical principles, and as confirmed by induction from observable facts.

Like Schopenhauer, Hartmann views life from the standpoint of hedonism, measuring all its value in terms of pleasure and pain.

Existence is essentially incomplete, irrational, and a huge blunder. This follows from its being due to a non-rational will, to the blind and uncontrollable impulse to will, which, as we have seen, is the first moment in the production of the world. This prime factor in existence then is regarded by Hartmann, no less than by Schopenhauer, as the deepest ground or source of life's misery. He agrees with his predecessor in maintaining that it is of the nature of will to be eternally dissatisfied; and he argues that since the sum of pain must always exceed that of pleasure, non-existence is better than existence, and so the world the result of an act of blind folly.[1]

In the next place, Hartmann attempts to supply a much more systematic *à posteriori* proof of the unhappiness of life than Schopenhauer has given us. His method, be it remem-

[1] Hartmann, though affirming that the will anterior to its activity in time was an eternal pining and an infinite hunger, does not include this in his pessimistic view of the world. He distinctly teaches that pleasure and pain are confined to consciousness, and what he says about the misery of unconscious will must, one supposes, be regarded as figurative language.

bered, is that of induction, and this is to be carried out in the appreciation of life, as good or bad, pleasurable or painful.

The author begins his enquiry by pointing out the difficulties in the way of a calculation of the pains and pleasures of life: as subjective phenomena they can only be appreciated directly by the subject himself. But the subject is, unfortunately, prone to make errors in the calculation. These arise, first of all, from the defects of memory and of the process of algebraic summation itself, and, secondly, from the influence exerted on the judgment by will and unconscious feeling. Even if the first source of error is eliminated by collecting a sufficient number of judgments, still the second remains in full force. We are all disposed, through the very nature of will as instinctive love of life, to overrate its value. As Jean Paul says: 'We do not love life because it is beautiful, but because we must love it, and hence it happens that we draw the inverse conclusion; that is, since we love life it is affirmed to be beautiful.'

This fundamental error in the appreciation of life, due to the bias of unconscious feeling, manifests itself in three principal forms or stages of illusion respecting existence, which answer to the several grades of human intelligence. Of these, the first is the naïve confidence of childhood and of antiquity. 'Happiness is supposed to be reached in the present stage of the world's development, and so to be attainable by the individual in this life.' The second form is that of the middle ages and of adolescence, and consists in the assurance that happiness is attainable by the individual in a transcendent life after death. The third stage, that of manhood and of the modern world, regards happiness as attainable in some future period of the world's development.

The author then proceeds to examine each of these beliefs. And, first of all, in connection with the first stage of illusion, he seeks to prove the excess of pain over pleasure in the individual life as at present constituted.

He commences his examination by a criticism of Schopenhauer's idea of the negative nature of pleasure. Hartmann rejects this as erroneous in principle. At the same time, his doctrine that all pleasure is satisfaction or pacification of will, seems to imply that some momentary state of want and desire (that is, pain) is a necessary antecedent of all pleasure. He urges, however, that this moment of painful longing is in some cases, *e.g.* the pleasures of the æsthetic senses, evanescent, and does not affect consciousness.

Hartmann, nevertheless, thinks that Schopenhauer's doctrine, though erroneous in theory, is practically very near the truth of the matter. He considers that there are several circumstances which serve to give an appearance of correctness to this idea of the negativity of pleasure. First of all, both pleasure and pain when prolonged wear out the nervous substance. This state of fatigue invariably gives rise to a desire for the cessation or relief of the feeling. Now this desire in the case of a pain increases the primary impulse to rid oneself of the pain, and so helps to make this cessation of a painful condition doubly a relief. In the case of pleasure, however, the desire for relief counteracts the primary impulse to retain the pleasure, and so tends to make the cessation of a pleasure a painless and neutral condition. Hence the indirect pleasures (which arise from the cessation of pain) are far more intense and striking than the indirect pains.

This rather ingenious argument appears to aim at showing the predominance of the indirect pleasures over the indirect

pains. Hartmann further contends that the indirect pleasures greatly preponderate over the direct pleasures. He adds that the former—for example, the gratification which comes from the cessation of tooth-ache—are greatly inferior in intensity to the pains which are their antecedent conditions. Once more, all pain as dissatisfaction of will makes itself known in consciousness; but satisfaction of will does not always make itself felt as pleasure. Again, all satisfaction of will is, as Schopenhauer urges, momentary and vanishing, whereas dissatisfaction may be prolonged through long intervals.

As a final argument in favour of the natural superiority of pains over pleasures, Hartmann urges that a given pain is not compensated by a pleasure of like intensity. This is a concession to Schopenhauer's rather wild adoption of Petrarch's saying: *Mille piacer non vagliono un tormento.* Hartmann affirms that a person would prefer to have no sensation rather than to hear first of all musical discords for five minutes, and afterwards a beautiful musical composition for the same interval.

The foregoing mode of establishing the excess of pain over pleasure is called by Hartmann the *à priori* proof: I will call it the psychological argument to distinguish it from the metaphysical.

The empirical proof consists in reviewing the several conditions, impulses, and activities of actual human life, and in showing that the excess of pain over pleasure is apparent everywhere. I will merely give the results of this examination. The several aspects or directions of human feeling and action may be reduced to the following eight groups:

1. Conditions of life which are of value simply as warding off evil and as bringing their subject up to the zero-point of

sensation (the neutral point between pain and pleasure). These include health, youth, freedom, and material sufficiency.

2. Those conditions or activities which bring nothing but pain, as envy, anger, hatred, &c.

3. Those which have no intrinsic value but are simply means to some end beyond themselves, as the pursuit of riches, power, and honour.

4. Those which bring the subject a certain pleasure, though this is more than compensated by the pain inflicted on others, as acts of immorality, love of dominion, hatred, revenge, &c.

5. Those which bring the subject in the average much more pain than pleasure, as sexual love, the love of children, pity, ambition, and hope.

6. Activities based on illusions which will be seen through as intelligence progresses, so that the pleasure will be much diminished and in a far greater ratio than the pains. This class includes the impulses of love, vanity, the desire for fame, religion, and hope. Hartmann thinks that the desire for another's esteem as well as self-esteem rests on illusion. For even if another's judgment about us is correct, which is rarely the case, it can have no real value apart from its influence on that person's conduct towards ourselves.

7. Those conditions which are recognised as evils and which are only accepted as means of escaping greater evils. Work has already been mentioned: another is marriage.

8. The cultivation of science and art which brings an excess of pleasure, though this pleasure can be enjoyed only by a very few, since but a small proportion even of those who profess to care for these objects have any real scientific

or æsthetic capacity. Moreover, the gain, which at first sight appears to arise from these activities, is more than counterbalanced by the peculiar pains to which those who are fitted to enjoy these pursuits are exposed through their superior degree of intelligence.

The conclusion of this professedly systematic investigation of life is 'the indubitable result that, at present, pain preponderates in a high degree over pleasure in the world, not merely as a general fact, but also in the case of every individual, even of the person who stands in the most favourable circumstances.'

Under the second stage of the illusion Hartmann reasons, mostly from his own metaphysical principles, against the possibility of a future life.

In dealing with the third and last stage of the illusion, Hartmann goes over most of the activities discussed in connection with the first stage, seeking to show that there is no prospect of any material improvement in the future with respect to any one of these conditions of life. Thus, we are told that however rapidly the therapeutic art may advance, the forms of disease will increase in greater proportion than the remedies. So, too, the quantity of wrong-doing is not materially affected by progress; it is simply the form which becomes more decent. Not only so, the increase of sensibility with respect to the suffering of wrong, which is an ingredient of intellectual and emotional progress, is practically equivalent to an increase in the number of acts of wrong themselves. As to science, discoveries will more and more be made, not by individuals endowed with extraordinary genius, but by the co-operation of many mediocre minds, and this reduction of human intellects to one level will necessarily be accompanied by a large decrease in the whole

amount of enjoyment connected with scientific production. Art, again, will cease, with the advance of civilisation, to be an object of pure delight sought for its own sake, and will sink into a means of refreshment after toil, or an opiate by which people may be freed from the misery of ennui.

If we look carefully at the lauded results of progress, they will be seen to dwindle to an inappreciable quantity. Theoretical science contributes nothing to the happiness of mankind. Its effect on morals is infinitesimal. On the other hand, practical science or invention has, no doubt, done much to guard us against evils, but it has effected little, if anything, in the furtherance of positive happiness. The one positive result of scientific invention, and the material improvements which follow in its train, is the release of a certain quantity of human force, hitherto engaged in struggle with physical want, for the higher mental work, through which the end of the world-process is to be hastened. Social and political progress again simply improves the negative conditions of happiness, but does nothing to augment the positive pleasures of life. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the growth of intelligence and sensibility in mankind is rapidly bringing about a clearer recognition of the predominance of suffering, and this recognition, amounting, as it does, to an increase of pain, far more than outweighs the few insignificant benefits of progress.

And now, what does our author propose to do with mankind in this apparent dead-lock? Schopenhauer had been content to suggest as the only way out of the difficulty what the mystic ascetics of all ages had implicitly taught, and the Buddhist religion had distinctly defined—namely, the breaking or killing of the individual will through renunciation of life's pleasures, the 'denial of the will to live,'

or, to express it otherwise, the gradual quiescence of the will in view of its own contradictoriness and nothingness.

Hartmann objects to this, in the first place, that it is inconsistent with Schopenhauer's fundamental idea of the essential unity of all individual wills. He further thinks that the suggestion is a confession of intellectual impotence, and no adequate solution of the problem of existence at all. While a pessimist in an empirical sense, he cannot be content with pessimism as a speculative creed. Pessimism must be reconciled with optimism under some higher conception of existence, and this Hartmann seeks to effect by means of his theory of the Unconscious.

The evil of the world arises, as we have seen, from its being the product of will. But will is not the only factor. Representation or intelligence had a part in its creation, and, owing to this, we find an element of order or logical development in the universe. The recognition of this factor at once enables us to take up the position of the optimist Leibnitz. We can confidently affirm that the world is arranged and governed as wisely and as excellently as it is possible for it to be; that 'if, in the all-wise Unconscious, among all possible representations, that of a better world had had a place, this other would certainly have been produced.' This could only be made doubtful by showing that the Unconscious is aiming at an unworthy final end, or uses inappropriate means for securing this end, neither of which is possible. On the contrary, we may discover in the world-order a distinctly rational aim. The logical element, having been necessarily called in by the will in order to enable it to project itself in definite activity, has gradually acquired independence and supremacy, and this is shown in the direction of the whole world-process to a rational final end.

What then, it may be asked, is this final end (*Endzweck*) of the world-process? Hartmann follows Hegel very closely in considering this problem. Is, he asks, consciousness the final end, as Hegel asserts, and as might appear from the fact that it is gradually progressing and rising? Certainly not. It cannot be an end to itself (*Selbst-zweck*). 'With pains it is born, with pains it devours its existence, with pains it purchases its elevation; and what does it offer as a compensation for all this? A vain self-mirroring!' What, then, is the final end? Consciousness is clearly the *proximate* end. But the essence of consciousness lies in the emancipation of the intellect from the will. Hence we may safely conclude that the final aim contemplated in the order of the world's development, and the genesis of conscious minds, is that the will be delivered from that state of infinite hunger in which, as we have seen, it existed previously to its prehension of the intellectual representation. In other words, the will is to be cast back into its primary condition of pure potency. 'The all-wise Unconscious, which thinks both end and means as one, has formed consciousness merely in order to release the will from the unblessedness of its willing, from which it cannot release itself—the final end of the world-process, for which consciousness serves as the last means, is to realise the greatest possible attainable condition of happiness, namely that of painlessness' (pp. 755–6).

But how is this reduction of will to pure potency involving the ability to will and not to will, to be effected through consciousness? By a conscious denial of will. For if in consciousness the will finds itself resolved not to will, it must necessarily be split up into two antagonistic movements, that of empty willing, or willing to will, which lies outside and sustains the region of actuality, and that of

conscious non-willing to will. In this way it devours itself and returns to nothing, or rather to the condition of pure potency described before.

It remains to determine the precise nature and conditions of this conscious denial of will. First of all, Hartmann conceives it as the inhibition, so to speak, of a positive volition by a negative one, precisely analogous to the curbing of an immediate desire by a far-seeing resolve. He thinks that the representation can only act on will mediately by exciting an opposing negative will, and rejects Schopenhauer's idea of its acting directly as a quietive to the will. It is the antagonism of two contrary volitions, not of a volition and a perception, which brings about the cessation of volition as a whole.

In the second place there are several conditions needed for the realisation of this cessation of the world-process. First of all, it is necessary that a sufficient quantity of will should be concentrated in consciousness, for the negative volition must apparently be at least equal in mass to the remainder of volition manifested in the unconscious world. Hartmann does not tell us exactly how these quantities of volition are to be measured, but he thinks that there is no rational objection to the supposition that in some distant future, mankind will embody the requisite amount.

In addition to this condition, it is necessary that mankind as a whole should be pervaded with a sense of the misery of life, and a longing for the state of painless non-existence. Lastly, it is requisite that there be a sufficient comunication among the inhabitants of the earth so that they may *en masse* simultaneously execute a common resolve not to will. When these conditions are fulfilled we shall have the great *finale* of the world drama, one might,

perhaps, say, the universal execution of the 'happy despatch.'

It follows from this, says Hartmann, that Schopenhauer's prescription of an individual denial of will is premature and erroneous. The immediately right thing for the individual is, on the contrary, 'the affirmation of will to live.' Only by following out the instincts of nature, and by helping to prolong the life of mankind, can the final end, the release of will from its inherent misery, be reached. The highest duty of man is thus to work in harmony with the unconscious mind, to help on the world-process by seeking in every way to promote, first of all, the general growth of intelligence, by which men will be the more quickly brought to recognise the futility of willing, and, secondly, the spread of sympathy,[1] by which they will be lifted out of their narrow individual aims to take part in one universal aim, the annihilation of all misery by the total denial of will. This reconciliation of optimism and pessimism, says Hartmann, unlike pessimism pure and unalloyed, supplies an adequate basis for practical effort and hopeful endeavour.

If a refractory reader should still be dissatisfied, and ask what guarantee we have that the will may not again perform the same curious cycle of movements, Hartmann can only say that the fact of its having once done so, does not render it probable that it will do so again. The probability that a perfectly free will may again break out in volition is exactly $\frac{1}{2}$; that it will do so again n times, $\frac{1}{2^n}$; so that if we make n large enough the probability becomes

[1] Hartmann follows Schopenhauer in making the essence of sympathy to be the recognition of the substantial identity of the individual subject with the object of his sympathy.

a vanishing quantity. That is to say, the future act of enlightened mankind may or may not be the absolute end of existence; in any case we may be confident that its repetition *ad infinitum* will not be required.

With Hartmann, who still occupies a foremost place among contemporary German writers, our historical sketch of optimism and pessimism almost reaches its conclusion. A word or two will suffice to indicate the subsequent contributions to the question.

It was not to be supposed that the pessimism of Schopenhauer and his school would be allowed to take root in Germany, the native soil of the most ambitious forms of philosophic idealism, without any attempt being made to meet its conclusions. Numerous answers to pessimism will be found in the most recent developments of German literature. These consist for the most part of re-assertions of ideas already familiar in the earlier German philosophy. Thus, Professor Pfleiderer in the little work already referred to, 'Der Moderne Pessimismus,' seeks to evade the pessimist's condemnation of life by the re-elevation of a moral ideal, thus falling back on the ethical optimism of Kant and his followers. Much the same stand-point is adopted by Johannes Huber in his *brochure*, 'Der Pessimismus.' This writer, it should be added, brings pertinent objections to the pessimists' empirical mode of proving the misery of life. Yet, so far as I know, there has been no thorough and exhaustive examination of the empirical and scientific base of pessimism.[1]

[1] The Hegelian mode of looking at the question raised by pessimism is well represented by Johannes Volkelt in the work already referred to ('Das Unbewusste und der Pessimismus'). Volkelt further challenges some of Hartmann's calculations with respect to the preponderance of pain over pleasure. Strauss alludes to pessimism in his last work, 'The

I must not forget to allude to one of the most interesting forms of this reaction from the prevailing systems of pessimism. Hartmann, as we have seen, is concerned to disprove the value of the social and industrial, as of the other aspects of progress. Such a doctrine was certain to evoke replies from some of the many practical minds of the day, which see, in the future developments of social life, an indefinite area of expansion of human comfort and happiness. The most important illustration of this direction known to me, is the work of Herr Dühring, entitled 'Der Werth des Lebens.' This writer is spoken of by Herr Vaihinger in an interesting work entitled 'Hartmann, Dühring, und Lange,' as 'the first methodic optimist.' This is, perhaps, a slight exaggeration, since Shaftesbury and Hartley, Condorcet and Godwin, also had their methods. Dühring emphasises the law of change or transition of mental state as a condition of any continued feeling, and thus seeks to justify the need of pain as a *sine quâ non* of pleasure. He also argues that the disagreeable in life is a valuable and necessary stimulus to the attainment of good. His most interesting speculations, however, refer to the future condition of mankind after certain social changes have been effected. Dühring is 'a glowing socialist.' All evil in his view (as in that of the Revolutionists) arises from alterable social circumstances, and he is confident that the industrial regeneration of society will result in another golden age of happy content.

Old Faith and the New.' He thinks it is to be disposed of in a very easy way. 'Every true philosophy,' he says, 'is necessarily optimistic, as otherwise she hews down the branch on which she herself is sitting.' How is this? 'If the world is bad, the pessimist's thought of it as a part of it is bad also, and so the world becomes good.' This reads like solemn trifling. The pessimist's thought may be bad as an action, and yet true as an affirmation.

As the last word on this momentous question, I would quote the opinion of the late Professor Lange, whose 'Geschichte des Materialismus' (soon I hope to be accessible to English readers) constitutes one of the most able philosophic works of recent times.[1]

Lange seeks to mediate in a philosophic spirit between optimism and pessimism. Optimism is a spontaneous ideal creation of the mind through a synthesis of emotion. It is in a sense a fiction; yet it must be held to as an ideal which our feelings compel us to frame. On the other hand, pessimism, which is the product of cool reflection, exists only as a contrast to optimism. It is the negation of the optimistic ideal through an assemblage of facts.[2] Thus optimism and pessimism are not two extremes which have to be reconciled. They are two equally justified and irreconcilable modes of viewing existence. This view of the matter seems to rob optimism, at least, of logical truth. It may be true in the sense of answering to permanent human desires; but it is untrue as an expression of actual facts. Lange has written on social and industrial questions, and seems to have held a position midway between the *laissez faire* optimists and the more despairing Malthusians. Like J. S. Mill, he takes a hopeful view of the future industrial interests of society, which he considers must be re-shaped according to some scheme of socialism. 'Communism,' he

[1] Lange's views on pessimism and its relation to optimism are to be found in the second edition of his 'Geschichte des Materialismus,' book ii. part iv. chap. iv. 'Der Standpunkt des Ideals.'

[2] 'The optimist praises the harmony which he himself has projected into the world. The pessimist, on the other side, is right in a thousand instances; and yet there could be no pessimism at all without the natural ideal-image which we carry in us. It is the contrast with this which first makes reality bad' ('Geschichte,' vol. ii. p. 541).

says, 'is a supplementary principle to the political economy of egoism.'[1]

[1] 'J. S. Mill's Ansichten über die sociale Frage.' A curious illustration of a neutral position in relation to optimism and pessimism is to be met with in a theory of pleasure and pain put forward by the late Léon Dumont in his 'Theorie Scientifique de la Sensibilité.' Pleasure being said to be but the subjective aspect of the composition or integration of forces, pain that of their disintegration or dispersion, and all modes of force having their subjective side, it seems to follow, according to M. Dumont, that the whole amounts of pleasure and pain in the universe must be exactly equal.

CHAPTER VI.

A NEARER DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM.

We have now reached the end of our historical sketch. We have traced the rise of the earliest instinctive forms of optimism and pessimism, though we have not as yet gone very deeply into the nature of the impulses which underlie these beliefs. Out of these vague, ill-defined conceptions of life as good or ill, we have watched the reasoning mind shape to itself definite propositions, and set reasons for its affirmations both in experience and in the region of the supra-sensible and the transcendental. And we have seen by how many diverse methods, especially in the case of optimism, these reasoners have sought to establish their final estimate of life.

In the face of these conflicting views, the reader will be ready to ask whether there is any means of comparing their respective merits with the object of arriving at an approximately correct opinion on the subject. I think that such a critical comparison will be found to be possible within certain limits to be defined presently. In conducting this inquiry, it will be necessary to examine first of all the grounds put forward for the reasoned forms of the beliefs in question. After this we shall need to look again at the instinctive forms of these beliefs with the view of inspecting

their psychological sources, and of pointing out the bearing of these on the question of the objective truth of the propositions put forward.

The first limitation I would impose on our problem is that in judging of the worth of the world we are to use the standard of human and other sensibilities concerned. That is to say the goodness or badness of the world is to be taken in the sense that on the whole the world is productive of happiness or of misery to its conscious tenants. This restriction may, no doubt, be thought very arbitrary, and opponents of modern pessimism have commonly tried to turn their enemies' position by placing worth in something other than feeling. I do not purpose to discuss fully here the question whether any definition of worth is ultimately tenable which has no reference to the feelings of conscious minds.[1] It will be conceded that these feelings form one well-marked ground of value, and the fact that modern pessimism has explicitly rested the question on this issue makes it highly desirable to confine ourselves to this view of the problem.

The objection to making feeling, or pleasure and pain, the exclusive standard of worth in things, whether in human conduct or in external objects, arises, I conceive, very largely from the associations which belong to the word pleasure as employed in common discourse. It is an undeniable fact that the popular mind distinguishes between pleasure and other things esteemed good; for example, virtue. Pleasure, in fact, as conceived by the non-philosophical person, refers to certain orders of pleasure only, that is to say, to the intenser and more exciting enjoyments which

[1] See a full and able discussion of this question in Mr. Sidgwick's 'Methods of Ethics,' book i. ch. ix. and book iii. ch. xiv.

are commonly marked off as 'sensual gratifications.' It cannot too often be repeated, that in making pleasure the test of worth, we must extend the term so as to include every discoverable variety of agreeable feeling, the quiet enjoyments of the man of science and of the artist, no less than those of the 'man of pleasure.' Thus, for example, it is important to bear in mind that what is popularly marked off from the coarser kinds of pleasure as *satisfaction* is as much pleasure in the strict philosophical sense as any sensual enjoyment. The peaceful and quietly happy state of mind of a man who looks back on well-accomplished duty is thus a mode of pleasure.[1]

If this full and consistent meaning of the term pleasure be steadily kept in view, and if at the same time it be remembered that the worth of a thing, from a hedonist's point of view, includes its whole capability of lessening and increasing not only our own pains and pleasures, but those of all known sentient beings, the objection to making agreeable feeling the one ground of value in objects is robbed of most of its force. The popular mind, usefully enough, distinguishes things which are sought simply for immediate gratification from other objects possessing value. It also, with equally good reason, distinguishes objects sought for a person's sole gratification from those pursued from other motives. The hedonist justifies these distinctions, while at the same time he shows that all things alike

[1] It is curious to notice the inconsistencies in the popular use of the term pleasure. For the most part, to live a life of pleasure is condemned by the serious and religious man as mean and unworthy. Yet, at the same time, we are bidden in a popular hymn to cultivate religion as the true source of enjoyment.

> 'Tis religion that can give
> Sweetest pleasure while we live,' &c.

may in the last resort owe their value to some mode of agreeable feeling.[1]

An objection may naturally be taken *in limine* to this line of inquiry on the ground that we are hereby erecting a subjective standard, namely our own or others' feelings, into a measure of objective existence. This is, in truth, Spinoza's objection to all conceptions of a worth fixed and resident in the universe.[2] But this argument is only valid against those who would give to the world's worth an absolute meaning. To talk of the value of the universe out of all relation to some percipient and sentient mind may be misleading; not so, however, to speak of its worth in relation to such minds. This is what we all do every day with reference to individual objects. Nobody, whatever his philosophical principles may be, really thinks it in practice an error to call the corn which nourishes us, and the blue sky which gladdens us, good and precious; and this mode of speech may be adopted with a full consciousness that all the worth is due to the relation of the particular object to human or other feelings. Similarly, there can be no contradiction in conceiving the world as a whole as having a certain value in relation to the happiness and misery which it is fitted to produce and promote.

A second objection may be raised against this line of

[1] For an interesting and able defence of the hedonist's conception of value, see Fechner's 'Vorschule der Aesthetik.'

[2] A similar objection may be raised from the side of practical common sense. 'Whatever the character of the world, what can I do to help it?' This is well put by Robert Browning in the lines:

> 'Foul be the world or fair,
> More or less, how can I care?
> 'Tis the world the same
> For my praise or blame' ('A Lovers' Quarrel').

inquiry, namely, that we do not know all the conscious existence involved in the world, and therefore cannot determine its worth even when interpreted by the subjective standard of feeling. All sentient life falling within the limits of our observation and knowledge fills but a point in the vast and immeasurable area of space and time occupied by the world as a whole. And even within these narrow boundaries how much sentient life there may be enfolded in microscopic organisms which as yet escape all our efforts to observe and to classify them! This objection is, no doubt, valid so far as it is directed to any final and exhaustive interpretation of existence. All our knowledge is necessarily relative to our powers of observation, and the judgments based on this knowledge must be regarded as relative also. The worth of the world must mean its bearing on happiness and misery so far as these are known to us. Of course, if we find, for example, that our familiar world involves an excess of evil, it may still be contended that this is but a tiny fragment of existence, and that after all the totality of the universe may be a vast realisation of happiness. But the fact remains that as far as we are concerned the world is a bad one. Nor is this all. In the absence of all other evidence respecting the nature of the life which may be presumed to fill the inaccessible regions of the world, the conclusion we arrive at respecting the accessible domain of conscious existence must, if we are to reason from the known to the unknown, afford some ground for conjecturing, at least, that the world as a whole is of a like complexion.

It follows from this that the question of optimism and pessimism will have to be mainly determined by the character of *human* life. We are largely ignorant of the

range of other animal life on the earth and in the world as a whole; and, what is more important, we cannot ascertain, except in a very rough, tentative manner, the amounts of pleasure and suffering which accompany the various grades of animal organisation. We presume, it is true, on certain tangible grounds, that in man is concentrated the most intense and most various sensibility; yet, perhaps, it would be a little hazardous to say that the mere handful of the human race unites within itself a considerable balance of the world's capacity for pleasure and pain. Accordingly, it will be safer to regard the worth of the world mainly in reference to our own species, not seeking to determine the larger and infinitely more difficult question of the value of life as a whole.

Since, then, our problem is to ascertain, if possible, the worth of the world only in relation to sentient minds (particularly human minds), it will exclude the discussion of several of the foregoing forms of so-called optimism and pessimism. For example, the world cannot, from our point of view, be shown to be a good world just because it is the elevation of an intelligent principle or reason, unless it be distinctly implied that such intelligence is aiming at the good, that is, the happiness, of sentient creation. It might, perhaps, be affirmed, on the supposition that this reason is a conscious being, that the gratification attending his self-evolution would more than compensate all the suffering involved in the process; yet this idea, even if conceivable, is too purely fanciful to need consideration here. Finally, it is manifest that this supremacy of intelligence can give no worth to the world, according to our present standard, if, as with Hegel, it is conceived as an unconscious principle.

The only way in which this hypothesis of a supreme principle of reason could enter into our problem (except it be affirmed as a guarantee of the world's happiness) is by its being regarded as a source of joy to intellectual minds. To think of the world as dominated by reason, it may be said, is a pure and constant delight to all contemplative minds. And if, with Plato and Aristotle, we place the pleasures of intellect far above all others, it might with some plausibility, perhaps, be urged that this idea has a bearing on optimism, even on our own standard of estimation. Yet this position has not, so far as I know, been really asserted; nor does it seem probable that anyone would be bold enough to maintain that the modicum of intellectual satisfaction derivable from this source would appreciably affect the balance of happiness in the world.

On similar grounds I shall exclude the opposed hypothesis of a blind force, as unfitted to settle the question raised from our present stand-point. The idea of necessity may become depressing to many minds, especially when it is conceived as a tyrannous fate which is vaguely pictured as conscious of what it is doing, and nevertheless caring nothing about the results of its momentous freaks. Yet nobody, one supposes, would seriously argue that the mere belief in such a blind necessity would serve to make the world a miserable abode for man in the absence of more tangible evils. Not only so, it may be contended that the gloomy character of the idea of necessity is altogether artificial and removable by the inculcation of new habits of thought, and that when the metaphysical idea of force or necessity shall have been transformed into the scientific idea of uniformity, men will learn to see that there is much more that is elevating and assuring than dismaying in the conception. A proper

appreciation of the bearings of uniformity and fixity in the order of things as a whole on human prediction and the regulation of conduct, will, one supposes, gradually serve to invest the scientific conception with something of positive value for human feeling.

Just as little can we be disposed, from our present hedonistic stand-point, to accept a settlement of the question of the value of life on the ground that it does not supply the conditions of perfect and absolute knowledge. Even supposing that the intellectual craving for something lying behind all phenomena is a permanent element of the human mind, it can hardly be maintained that the frustration of this search will of itself constitute so large and prominent a factor of the collective human experience as to determine the final balance of pleasure and pain. It is, however, far from self-evident that this search after the ancient 'absolute' will be a permanent factor of intellectual life. It is at least supposable that men may gradually learn to content themselves with an exact knowledge of phenomena and with relative certainty, especially when they find that the attainment of these results answers all the needs of practical life. In any case, the supposed existence of an unsolved mystery in the universe will hardly suffice to condemn it *in toto* even in the eyes of the most enthusiastic aspirant after intellectual light. On the other hand, the prospect of possessing the ultimate secret of the universe would not of itself lead one to accept existence as a condition of happiness. The supposed truth may, of course, as in the case of the Christian believer, be of such a character as to cast an optimistic glow on the world. But the mere satisfaction of the inquiring impulses of the mind will not alone serve to impart a value to the existing world. No doubt, the fitness of the universe to

baffle or to satisfy the permanent intellectual needs of the mind must count as one factor of its hedonistic value. Taken by itself, however, this aspect by no means decides the question.

Just as the intellectual conception of the world, whether as informed with intelligence or as supplying an adequate object for human cognition, loses its optimistic character from our present point of view, so also does the æsthetic interpretation of the universe. Even if the world be a perfect harmony, a beautiful cosmos, the contemplation of which must yield a pure delight to Deity and to man alike, this hardly amounts to the affirmation that the world contains more happiness than misery. In order to bring it up to this point it would be needful to show that such an æsthetic contemplation of the universe is fitted to yield a sum of delight which transcends all possible evils of life, and, further, that it is destined to become the portion of the greater part of mankind.[1] It need hardly be said that Plato makes no pretence of establishing either of these assertions. The co-existence, moreover, of Plato's æsthetic intuition and its accompanying delight with the gloomiest theory of life in Schopenhauer's system seems to show that the former has no direct bearing on optimism as we are now conceiving it. Like the idea of a supreme intelligence, that of a dominant harmony may enter as a subordinate factor into our estimation of the world; but it cannot serve of itself to determine its value.

Lastly, our present stand-point requires us to exclude from consideration that form of optimism which places the

[1] Unless, indeed, it be said that this delight, even when confined to a few minds, is of so surpassing a quality as to more than counterbalance an excess of misery in the case of the majority of created beings.

value of the world in a moral or spiritual result. It may be that our present life is eminently adapted to evolve moral character, that the development of the individual, as of the race, is in the direction of a moral ideal or of a realisation of free-will. Again, to present this idea in its theological form, it may be that the earth is the arena of conflict in which men are to work out and perfect spiritual holiness; or, to express it otherwise, that the object of the Creator in shaping our world was, so to speak, to erect a vast stage on which the final triumph of justice over wrong, and the vindication of rectitude and virtue against impudent and momentarily prosperous wickedness, are to be gradually unfolded in impressive spectacle. It may be, too, that this moral result has, according to other conceivable standards of estimation, a value which must more than counterbalance any possible excess of misery in the world. Still, it does not enter into our present limited problem, except, indeed, in a subordinate manner. The worth of justice and morality itself, reckoned as a condition and an ingredient of pleasurable feeling, must obviously be included in our conception of human happiness. Not only so, any effects of moral and spiritual training on happiness in an after-life, supposing these to be proven, would, of course, have to be taken into account in judging of the value of the world. But the mere conception of the world as a sphere for moral development does not in itself carry with it optimism in our present sense.

So much respecting the first limitation of the problem. The second limitation is that we wholly reject the form of the question suggested by the etymology of the terms optimism and pessimism. In order to discover whether the existing world is the best of all possible worlds, we require to know whether any other world besides the present

is possible. Similarly with respect to the doctrine, not too confidently put forward by Schopenhauer, that the world is the worst possible.[1] All such assertions imply that we not only transcend experience but that we know the whole secret of its origin, and through this knowledge are able to conceive some other possible order of the universe. To do this would be to arrogate to ourselves powers to which even the metaphysician who explores into the reality underlying and sustaining our experience does not lay claim. This is our world, and the only one known to us. We have therefore no standard of comparison, and only fall into a pleasing illusion when we talk about other possible worlds.

By optimism and pessimism we must mean, therefore, the hypotheses that the world is on the whole good, or conducive to happiness, and so better than non-existence, and that the world is on the whole bad, or productive of misery, and so worse than non-existence.

The last limitation to be insisted on is that the answer to our question, if any answer is to be reached, must be sought within the limits of experience. This follows, indeed, from the above definition of 'worth,' when applied to the world. If the world is to be regarded as good because on the whole it leads to a balance of pleasurable consciousness, it is vain to attempt to solve the problem by any other means than that of a direct appeal to fact and experience.[2]

This limitation will require us to reject in the first place all attempts to override the teaching of experience by some

[1] No doubt, Schopenhauer here, as elsewhere, professes to base his conclusion on experience; but the proposition that any increment to the existing surplusage of calamity and pain would be incompatible with life is utterly unprovable.

[2] 'One cannot take up a stand-point outside life and experience in the estimation of life' (Dühring, 'Der Werth des Lebens').

metaphysical conception of the nature of good and evil, pleasure and pain. Thus the subtle attempts of Augustine, Leibnitz, and others to destroy the reality of evil by assigning it a limiting or privative function are simply unmeaning verbal exercises from our present stand-point. Experience tells us that pain as feeling is as real as pleasure, and this fact must be accepted without any qualification from metaphysical sources.

There is, indeed, something positively insulting to the common understanding of mankind in the metaphysical optimist's mode of conjuring away the evil of life. It cannot be too emphatically asserted that suffering is a real and positive element of our experience, and cannot possibly be got rid of by any ontological hypothesis. Even if evil be but the limiting aspect of good in the ontological system, it is none the less a palpable and obstinate reality to our sensibilities, something which, by the very make of our emotional and active nature, we must hate, condemn, and shun.

The same remark applies to every theological idea which seeks to take off the sharp edge of human suffering by asserting the predominance of happiness in the universe. Even if this is so, the fact of suffering remains. Thus if it be true, as was said by the optimists of the last century, that human existence, taken in its whole duration, is a vast preponderance of felicity, it is none the less certain that to those who now suffer, the evil of the world is just as real a thing, whatever amount of happiness may be in store for them hereafter. The thought of a more than counterbalancing good in a future state, may, no doubt, if we are capable of a persistent imagination of the remote, help us to bear our present misery, but it does not make this misery one whit less real.

Still less can the reality of present human suffering be diminished by the supposition that an aggregate balance of happiness is effected through the bestowal of this boon on a vast majority of the whole collection of created beings. A high development of the sympathetic imagination might, perhaps, enable mankind to draw some brief solace from the reflection that even if to them life is a chill and murky night, the warm sunlight of joy somewhere irradiates vast plains of conscious existence. Yet it must be admitted that such an attitude of spirit is not easily maintained. On the other hand, it is certain that so far as our misery is an object of our consciousness at all, it can only be made more real and palpable by being set in juxtaposition with the blessedness of other species of created beings. Nor is this all: to reflect on such a distribution of good and evil as that here suggested, cannot fail, in the case of those who happen to be on the unfortunate side, to awaken a bitter sense of inequality and of apparent injustice which must appreciably add to the intensity of their suffering.

In the next place this limitation to the teaching of experience will make it necessary to pass by all attempts to anticipate the results of experience by means of metaphysical or theological deductions. Here we have to accept the teaching of experience in its purity and integrity without let or hindrance from transcendental conceptions. Thus, for example, we need not concern ourselves with the efforts of that naïve Christian teleology which could see in the world nothing but pretty adaptations and comforting provisions for human security and well-being. Every such attempt to read a theological or metaphysical theory into the facts of experience is beset with danger, and can only

mislead those who are bent on ascertaining what experience itself has to tell them.

Lastly, this limitation will exempt us from the necessity of inquiring into the various metaphysical or theological conceptions by which it is sought to account for experience when this is first ascertained. Concerning the value of such *à priori* attempts to explain experience, I shall say a few words presently. Here it is enough to say that as our problem is distinctly one of experience, it would be quite irrelevant to pay much attention to the several modes of deducing the results of experience from metaphysical principles. An exception, however, will be made to this rule in the case of the more immediate subject of our investigation, namely, the systems of modern pessimism, which so unite the teachings of experience with metaphysical deductions that it is hardly possible to examine the one element apart from the other.

With respect to the theological ideas by means of which the facts of life's evil and good have been interpreted, the case seems to be a little different. Theological truth, sometimes at least, professes to rest to some extent on experience, and to be a fair inference from observable facts. Consequently if, as must clearly be the only correct way, we interpret experience in its widest sense as including facts and all legitimate inferences from these, it may be urged that we are bound to include theological ideas in our investigation. For example, Christian theology, recognising the misery of our present life, teaches that this misery is to be more than compensated, in the case of a certain proportion of mankind, by future blessedness. Now, if this future existence is inferrible either from historical or other data, it must plainly be included as an element in the life

whose value is to be determined. Again, this theology tells us that the existence of a benevolent and wise Creator is inferrible from the complex combinations of the world. If so, we may be sure that even if human life, so far as we can observe it, seems to be other than happy, this defect will be somehow made good.

To this line of argument there are one or two distinct objections. In the first place, it is by no means agreed among men that experience does guarantee the truth either of a future life or of the existence of a benevolent Creator. Even among theologians themselves the possibility of ascending 'from nature to nature's God' by a strictly logical path has been denied. Accordingly, they have either taken refuge in some supposedly invincible ontological argument, or have based their belief to a large extent on the instincts of our emotional nature, and thus transformed it from a proved conviction to an unproved faith. And many minds not theological, deeply versed in the knowledge of the world and its laws, have expressed themselves very distinctly as rejecting the evidence of natural theology. It is certain, at least, as I have already remarked, that modern science has made it impossible to resort to the once common modes of inferring providential care, whether over the individual, the family, the nation, or even the whole race. The recognition of the constant uniformity of phenomena, of the dependence of every event, however intricate, on definite observable conditions, has compelled the adherents to a natural theology to frame new conceptions of the Deity and of his relation to man and his dwelling-place. It is the invariable order, the ruling law, from which the Divine government is now inferred, not the individual event with its startling strangeness, and its admirable resemblance to human con-

trivance. And whether this new mode of inference is a legitimate one, except by the help of metaphysical preconceptions, may at least be reasonably questioned.

In the second place—and this is the principal objection to the inclusion of theological hypotheses in our present inquiry—the worth of human life, so far from being made dependent on theological conceptions, is itself one of the facts on which the propositions of theology have to establish themselves, or to which at least they have to accommodate themselves. It must be obvious, for example, that the truth of the existence of a benevolent Creator is directly affected by the pessimist reading of human life, if that reading is correct. Just as the indisputable existence of evil or misery tells against the omniscience or the omnipotence of a good God, so such a gloomy view of life as that of Schopenhauer would tell against his benevolence as well.[1] Not only so, if it could be shown that this life is little better than a perpetual oscillation between pleasure and pain, and has no considerable balance of happiness as its result, the argument for a benevolent Ruler would be greatly attenuated. A benevolent Being, we argue, could

[1] It may of course be said that even in this case the blunder of creation might be due to a want of knowledge in a Creator bent on securing the well-being of his creatures. Yet the depth of ignorance involved in such a total overlooking of what, on the pessimist's showing, is the most constant and the innermost fact of life, is a supposition which does not easily harmonise with any worthy conception of a divine personality. If evil is a subordinate and fugitive ingredient of life, we may, perhaps, understand the Creator's not perceiving it beforehand; not so, however, if, as the pessimist argues, it is inseparably bound up with life. For the rest, it is sufficiently obvious that so pervading an evil cannot be accounted for by the third alternative, namely, that of a benevolent Creator limited in power. A Being of such a nature, and circumstanced as this supposition implies, would clearly resolve not to fashion any world whatever.

only aim at producing happiness, and would hardly care to breathe life and consciousness into a slumbering world just to effect a bare surplusage of pleasure above pain. Hence, if all the life directly known to us is discovered to be of no higher value than this, the probability of a benevolent Creator is seriously diminished. So much to illustrate the bearing of our present problem on the idea of a personal and well-disposed Maker of the world.

Not only so, the belief in a future life reposes to a large extent on the assurance of the existence of a wise and good God. Consequently, so far as the latter conviction is affected by our view of the value of present human life, the former belief will be affected also. If, for example, human experience testifies to the value of this life, and so favours the supposition of a benevolent design in creation, it supports *pro tanto* the anticipation of a further and supplementary beneficence in a future state, supposing some mode of future existence to be otherwise probable. If, on the other hand, life is pronounced miserable and worthless, it tells against a future state of happiness by telling against the existence of a Being who would be disposed to secure this boon for his creatures.

This, however, is only one side of the relation of our problem to the doctrine of a future life. If, it has been again and again urged, *e.g.* by Wollaston, our present existence be condemned, there is all the more reason for believing in a future state, provided the existence of a benevolent Creator be otherwise established. In truth, it is the evil of life which makes men cling the more tenaciously to the belief in something better hereafter. For, one argues, it is inconceivable that a benevolent and omniscient Being, free to choose, should have fashioned a world which necessarily

involves an excess of suffering as its consequence unless he saw that this calamity would be more than made good by the bliss of a life beyond the grave. No doubt, this reasoning is forcible, provided, as I have said, the existence of a good God is already known.[1]

Thus we see that the problem of the value of life has a very complicated bearing on the two leading theological ideas of a benevolent Creator and a future state. Accordingly, there are good theological grounds for not including these ideas among the data of our investigation.

The reader may, perhaps, ask whether such a problem as I have here defined is really of any vital importance. What, it may be asked, can it concern us to know whether life is really a balance of happiness or of misery? All that action requires is the knowledge that pain may be lessened and pleasure augmented through our voluntary endeavours. It cannot matter that the scale turns one way rather than the other, since our efforts must still be directed as they are now by the impulse to seek all that makes for happiness, and to shun all that makes for misery.

There is some force in these remarks. Yet a little reflection will show that they are not a valid objection to our inquiry. In the first place, even though it were conceded that our investigation has no bearing on practice (which, as I shall show immediately, is far from true), the

[1] It may be said that human misery was accepted as the price of the happiness of some unknown beings, transcending man in number as well as in capacity. But till we have evidence of the existence of such creatures, this counts for little. And even if their existence were ascertained, it would still be a mystery why the Creator should need to fashion a miserable race as a condition of a happy one; not to speak of the difficulty of imagining that a perfectly *just* Being would resolve to achieve the result on such conditions.

knowledge of the real felicific value of life would have a worth for our feelings. To all lovers of truth this knowledge would bring an intellectual satisfaction. Not only so, quite apart from its bearing on conduct, the real state of things in our earthly lot can hardly fail to be a matter of lively interest. Whether our common dwelling-place is an Eden or a lazaretto, or something between the two, is a question which can hardly fail to interest everybody; and if only a moderate power of sympathy is developed, this question must inspire a yet deeper and fuller sentiment. A man sent to prison would take a lively interest in knowing all about his new life and its surroundings, even though this knowledge could have no bearing on his conduct. I can easily conceive that some persons might prefer ignorance with respect to such a momentous point, arguing that

> Where ignorance is bliss
> 'Tis folly to be wise.

Yet this feeling could hardly counteract the powerful impulses which, in the case of a vigorous mind, lead to an undertaking of the inquiry. Nor is it certain in this case that ignorance is bliss; for the world may, after all, be better than we are disposed to think it antecedently to such systematic inquiry. In truth, it is probably only the man possessed of a strong suspicion that he is taking a too flattering view of life who would find our line of inquiry distasteful.

Of the importance of our inquiry as bearing on theological doctrines, little more need be said. Everybody will allow that our common life is not perfect, that misery is as real as happiness; and it must be a matter of serious interest even to the busiest of men to know all that bears on

the question whether his destiny is kept and shielded in a paternal hand, and will, if this hand is not somewhere bound, be on the whole a glorious one.

But apart from its important bearing on our emotional satisfaction, this question has a further value in relation to the whole doctrine of practice or the 'science of life.' According to hedonism, the highest good, the all-comprehensive end of rational action, is pleasure and the absence of pain. In laying down happiness as the end of all moral conduct, as of all other wise action, the hedonist or utilitarian assumes that his end is attainable in some measure. He may idealise happiness, conceive it in a far higher form than is at present attainable; yet he always postulates that in some shape and in some measure it can be actually secured. Now the question which is opened up in optimism and pessimism disputes this assumption. If pessimism is true, happiness is nothing but a chimera, and to make it the end of conduct is to bid oneself and others to grasp at the unattainable. Thus the question of the value of life is intimately connected with the whole of practical science or the theory of conduct.[1]

What, then, it may be asked, will be the exact effect of

[1] Herr Vaihinger, in the work already referred to, takes a slightly different view of the relation of the problem raised by optimism and pessimism to practical philosophy. 'The question,' he writes, 'of the worth of the world is related to problems of practical philosophy in the same way as the metaphysical inquiry into the being of the world to theoretic problems;' and the one problem is as insoluble as the other. In fact, however, if we confine ourselves to the region of the relative and get rid of 'the metempirical factor' in each of the problems, they are perfectly soluble. What the world is, whether for our intellects or for our emotions, is a perfectly legitimate question. At the same time I agree with Herr Vaihinger in placing this problem at the head of practical philosophy, unless, indeed, the question wherein all worth ultimately consists be regarded as prior to it.

the inquiry on ethics and the doctrine of practice as a whole? It is plain that the unattainability of an end does not disprove the intrinsic and supreme worth of this end. Even if happiness be shown to be illusory, the affirmation of happiness as the one true end is not in the least gainsaid. In fact, the postulation of a final end is something quite distinct from a proposition asserting a matter of fact, and as it cannot be proved by any number of such affirmations, so it cannot be disproved. What, then, will be the effect of an answer to our inquiry on the hedonist formula of life-conduct? If it is found that happiness is a mere dream, and that life is essentially miserable, the hedonist must clearly modify his supreme injunction. Instead of the maxim 'Pursue happiness' some other will have to be substituted.

Now, there are two such substitutive maxims conceivable. If, as even Schopenhauer allows, misery is to be avoided through the attainment of quiescence of all desires and impulses, it may be thought that the hedonist will say, 'Make exemption from pain thy final object.' Yet this is by no means self-evident. There is a choice between living and not living. The value of a painless life is, on the hedonist standard, zero. Moreover, it must be admitted that this painless condition could only be reached by dint of long and severe struggle, that is, through a large preliminary balance of pain. Hence it may be argued that the consistent hedonist will counsel men to seek a freedom from pain not by such a painful route as this, but by the easy if not painless course of suicide. Similarly the ethics which bases its maxims on the value of human happiness as a whole, will in this case transform its command 'Seek the good of others,' into the precept 'Assist others to throw off

the burden of their existence.' Painless homicide, even when the object of the act were so deluded as not to consent, might thus become the highest virtue.

But, it may be said, Would not such a result be the *reductio ad absurdum* of hedonism? The hedonist, like every teacher of a practical doctrine, intends his maxims for life and action, and yet we here see them leading to non-existence and total cessation of activity. I admit that in this case hedonism would be practically discredited. Although no statements respecting fact can really prove the falsity of an end, they can affect its fitness to be the object of action; for the *summum bonum*, or final end, is set up as the aim of action, and owes its significance to its relation to practical life. If, then, an end is shown to be in the nature of things unattainable, it is not disproved: it still remains the ideal direction for which we should make were the order of things changed so as to allow of its attainment. Nevertheless it is shown to be wholly unsuitable to be the supreme end of action in the existing order of things.

An end cannot, I have said, be proved or disproved by propositions asserting a matter of fact. In the strict sense, it is neither true nor false. Yet it can be said to be right or wrong, or better, perhaps, fit or unfit. Now, fitness in an end rests on two conditions. Of these the first is the correspondence of the end with men's active impulses, desires, and aspirations. An end which does not answer to these cannot, in the nature of the case, be categorically disproved (for the person who asserts it may contend that men's impulses should be other than they are); still it is rejected as absurd. The second condition of fitness in an end is that it be to some extent attainable. If it be not, it may be highly es-

timable and exactly consonant with human impulses, yet it lacks one of the chief qualifications of an idea which is to supply a direction to voluntary action.

It follows, then, that the bearing of our problem on the whole conception of practice is an exceedingly important one. The establishment of pessimism would, without doubt, lead to the rejection of hedonism and to new attempts to ground a theory of life on some other basis, as, for example, the supreme value of moral training and development.

CHAPTER VII.

THE METAPHYSICAL BASIS OF PESSIMISM.

OUR problem is now, perhaps, defined with sufficient accuracy, and we may at once proceed to the question whether it is susceptible of exact solution. In considering this point we may most appropriately set out with the particular answer to the problem given by modern pessimism. The fact that it is the prominent form of the question just now justifies to some extent this method of procedure. More than this, modern pessimism plumes itself on supplying the most elaborately reasoned answer which has ever been given to the question: 'What is the worth of the world?' It thus blocks the way, so to speak, to our inquiry, and must first be dealt with before the final solution, if attainable at all, can be reached.

In modern pessimism, as I have already remarked, science, or quasi-science, and metaphysics are curiously interwoven and blended into one collective system of thought. The authors are careful to tell us that they go to work scientifically, making use of well-verified truths and appealing to the facts of experience. Yet, for all this, they seek to transcend experience, and to base experience on an underlying structure of ontological conceptions. These conceptions, moreover, penetrate far into all their seemingly scientific reasonings, and even into their practical conclusions. It is

hardly possible, therefore, to give a critical estimate of pessimism without going somewhat into this ontological sub-structure. To point out some of the main difficulties in these metaphysical doctrines will be the object of the present chapter.

Before dealing, however, with the deficiencies of metaphysical pessimism, it may be worth while to say a few words on the drawbacks which necessarily attend any kind of interpretation of the good or evil of the world by means of ideas which transcend experience.

A very little reflection on the various world-principles which have done duty as the ontological foundations of a hopeful or despondent view of life will, I think, serve to show that they can effect nothing of any consequence in clearing up the mystery of evil. The utmost that these attempts can hope to do is to make certain aspects of the known universe of things a little more intelligible. How far any of them have succeeded even in this respect may, indeed, be well doubted. Still, it is their one *raison d'être*. In this very statement, however, we seem to discover their essential futility as expressions of the ultimate reality. For what is to make a thing intelligible? To bring it into agreement with the laws and habits of our minds. But our minds have received their structure in connection with this very order of things which is to be accounted for.[1] Consequently, all ontological deduction of the world has to be carried out by help of conceptions drawn from this very world itself. In other words, we are trying to account for

[1] It does not matter for my present purpose whether mind be regarded as a product of the universe or force, or as simply correlated with it. In either case its development proceeds in harmony with that of the world.

experience by itself, or, rather, to deduce the whole of the world from one of its parts. In truth, the very idea of explanation, whether it take the form of a final or of an efficient cause, is itself an idea of experience, so that to try to account for the contents of our experience must mean to remain all the while within this very region.[1]

If we glance back for a moment at the principal ontological hypotheses put forward as adequate explanations of the goodness or badness of the world, we see at once that they are mere projections of certain elements or functions of the conscious individual mind. The reason of this is obvious. We know things only in relation to our minds, and when we try to get beyond, to the *Ding an sich*, we are forced to carry an analogue of this conscious mind along with us. Whether we choose to call this analogue intelligence, thought, reason, or, on the other side, force, will, or yearning impulse, the process of inference is the same. Thought seems to account for things, because the very term thought includes within itself both subject and object, that is to say, the fundamental relation of all experience. Not only so, thought is controlled by will, is consequently active, and thus becomes the conceivable cause of change of movement. Can it be surprising that when we have thus once the semblance of our experience to start with, we should be able to reach this experience as a goal? The projection of will is more difficult, no doubt, since there is in this case no

[1] Schopenhauer learnt this from Kant, and goes far beyond his teacher in his contempt for the search after an absolute or first cause. To him the ultimate reality is immediately given in experience as the substance seen under the phenomenal veil. But this idea of seeing something in experience which is at the same time outside and independent of it, lands him in the worst confusion. Nor does he at all succeed in consistently regarding this principle as different from force or cause.

analogue for the cognitive, though there is for the active and creative, side of mind. Consequently with Schopenhauer the world-principle is something never distinctly conceived as to its nature, and stands in no discoverable relation to the universe. Consequently, further, from his point of view, the origin of the world of consciousness is an insoluble problem. Consequently, in fine, Hartmann is driven to make good the mischief caused by his predecessor's violent divorce of the abstract entity, Will, from its proper concrete belongings, and to fill up the emptiness of this phantasm with the more substantial body of the *Vorstellung*.

In truth, in glancing back at the successive world-principles which have seemed to offer a solution of the problem of existence, we are met by the very curious fact that ontology has exhausted psychology, that all the main activities of the human mind have, one after another, been objectified and erected into principles of being. Not only intellect and will—feeling itself has been put in requisition. In point of fact, feeling, as we shall see presently, is involved in 'the will' of the German pessimists. But, apart from this, we find that to one ancient contemplator of the world, the principles of love and hate seemed to be the deep springs of all visible existence.[1] Is there, in verity, any essential difference between this hypostatising of separate activities of mind and the lower forms of anthropological interpretation of nature as tenanted and inspired by an integral conscious mind? Are they not all at bottom the same method in various stages of refinement? Again,

[1] Since this was written a rumour has reached my ear of a new philosophic work bearing the title 'Phantasie als Welt-princip.' It seems, then, that I was premature in supposing that ontology had exhausted psychological distinctions.

if we must pursue this method at all, would it not be somewhat more rational, now that we have tried each leading mental faculty as a pure abstraction, to go back to the hypothesis of theism, and provide ourselves with a reality which is a concrete and complete conception, uniting in itself these *disjecta membra?* We would offer this suggestion, whatever its worth, to modern apologists of theism.

Yet even if the ontological explanation were not thus faulty in its very method, there would remain the insuperable objection that we can never be sure that the interpretation which seems to fit so nicely the actual world is the right one, that the world is and comes to be just what and how we conceive it. It is impossible to be sure of this till we can show that no two or larger number of hypotheses equally well fit in with the known order of things. And it cannot be concluded that this is so simply because our minds have up to the present been unable to conceive more than one. As a matter of fact, however, there is no one hypothesis which can lay claim to this exclusive prerogative. The ontologists, as we have seen, by no means agree as to the principle by which the world is to be accounted for.

After these few observations on the general value of a metaphysical construction of the world, let us pass to consider some of the principal defects in the systems of the two leading pessimists.

The first and fundamental objection to Schopenhauer's world-principle is that it is an inconceivability. Will, in the abstract, is wholly unthinkable. Schopenhauer rightly says force is to be rejected as covering a mystery. Yet it fares in nowise better with his own idea of will. Will, without content, aim, or representation, is a contradiction; and Schopenhauer feels it, and is always trying to free himself

from the toils into which his abstraction has cast him. The will is for ever trying to hide its nakedness, to clothe itself with thought as with sensibility, to become more anthropomorphic in its appearance, and thus to acquire the semblance of reality.

Once more, how are we to prefigure the relation of this reality to the visible universe? It cannot be its cause, neither does it exist alone antecedently to the world; for cause and time belong to phenomena only.[1] On the other hand, it cannot very well be co-existent with this world, for that involves simultaneity, and this is clearly a relation of time. Yet it is said to be eternal in the sense of never beginning or ending; though how there can be duration apart from time does not appear.

Again, how explain the objectification of will in the world at all? Why did the will ever pass through its graduated series of manifestations, which in time become the development of the organic out of the inorganic. To this question Schopenhauer gives no answer, except it be that it is the essential nature of will to seek to objectify itself.[2] He says we cannot explain the whence, the whither, or the why of existence, we can only show what it is.

[1] As might be expected, Schopenhauer does not consistently keep his will detached from the category of causation. When dealing with the forces of nature, which are nothing but will, he is compelled to speak of them as having the visible world as their 'result.'

[2] In an able criticism of some of the chief inconsistencies in Schopenhauer's system in 'Mind,' October 1876, Professor Adamson seeks to involve the pessimist in a contradiction on the ground that he regards will as the world-all, and yet considers it to be in a perennial state of want. This is ingenious, but perhaps a little forced. What will strives after is its self-objectification, which is, according to Schopenhauer, no new reality. An emotion which seeks to express itself is none the less complete as emotion.

But this position is quite untenable. The very *raison d'être* of metaphysic is to make more intelligible the known order of events. The only use of a hypothesis respecting the substance of things, is to enable us to deduce from this its discoverable manifestations. Schopenhauer wants to be neither pure scientist nor pure ontologist, but something between the two. He tries to reach a supra-sensible reality and yet escape the correlative obligation of illuminating the region of the known by means of this reality.

But, once more, if we approach Schopenhauer's theory from the side of his subjective idealism, the incoherences become far more striking.[1] If the phenomenal world be a shadow, a mere projection of the mind's *Vorstellung*, what right have we to suppose that there is any reality or *Ding an sich*, beyond the mind which thus creates the world? Absolute idealism, one can see, finds a starting-point in Kant's idealism, but to Schopenhauer's realism this last is wholly inimical. For to say that our own subjective experience gives us will in itself as its essential content is to ignore the barrier which most rigidly circumscribes all experience, namely the universal relation of subject and object. Even allowing for the present that subjective observation discovers such a thing as will, over and above the phenomena of volition, still it is obviously false to say that this object of thought is known as something absolute and transcendentally real. And, once more, how can the discovery, by subjective observation, of individual will (whatever its nature may be) be a ground for universalising this will and erecting it into the one all-comprehensive substance?

[1] Some of the insuperable difficulties in this aspect of Schopenhauer's system are well brought out by Mr. Adamson in the article already alluded to. They are also touched on by M. Ribot in his excellent work on Schopenhauer.

Again, even if these huge difficulties could be got over, we should still have to ask what criterion there is by which we may separate what belongs to this primary reality, and what is simply imposed on it by the subjective forms of consciousness. What grounds has Schopenhauer, for example, for saying that every human character and every material object is in its innermost nature will, and yet that the individuality of these things is no part of the reality, but an illusion? Kant's method of separating the variable matter from the constant form of experience does not help Schopenhauer here; for, *ex hypothesi*, the reality itself is as constant as its forms of space, time, and causality. The fact seems to be that Schopenhauer sought to burke this whole question by simply striking out substance from the subjective forms. He has not tried to show why the causal relations of things are unreal, while the idea of substance is real.

Schopenhauer appears to have dimly felt the difficulties here pointed out, and his scheme of Platonic Ideas, seems to me, so far as I can grasp its meaning, to be rather a clumsy device for getting rid of these objections. In the first place, it may be regarded as a rather forced means of saving the conceivability of will by a re-introduction of the cognitive element, and so of rendering a little less obscure the transition from will to the phenomenal world.[1] The Ideas may

[1] There is no doubt that this rehabilitation of the Platonic Ideas is, as M. Ribot says, largely due to the poetical and artistic impulses of Schopenhauer. The theory seems to me to be scarcely attached to the rest of Schopenhauer's system. Among the many difficulties in the way of fitting it in, I may point to the incomprehensibility of the process of artistic inspiration as the pure contemplation of ideas in which the subject ceases to be individual and becomes pure will-less intelligence. This, as Mr. Adamson points out, is directly contradictory to the author's

be regarded as supplying a direction for its immediate objectification, and so a definite path for its activity. If this is Schopenhauer's meaning, it may be said, perhaps, to cast a faint light on the mystery of the world's origin. In the second place, the world of ideas gives us a supra-empirical analogue of the relation of subject and object. In the Idea which is at once will and representation, the *Ding an sich* (will) is said to know itself as object. In this way Schopenhauer seems to me to be trying to accommodate his dominant conception of one substance to that dualism which, because it is inseparable from all experience, can never be wholly thought away.

If we turn to Hartmann's system we see at once that he clears himself, in appearance at least, of some of the obstructions which gather so thick about the path of his predecessor. Yet it may be doubted whether he has really secured a much greater degree of coherence than the other. Thus the reality, will, seems at first sight to be made more conceivable by the addition of unconscious representation; yet how can we accept a consistency which can only be reached by means of such vagaries of fancy as Hartmann betakes himself to in his account of the primary condition of will and representation, and of the nuptial process through which they blend?

Again, it may be said, Hartmann's renunciation of Kant's subjective idealism enables him to conceive the formation of the world as a real process in a real time. Yet the operation can only be made intelligible by a very cumbrous machinery of mediating agencies, such as the stage of empty willing, the nuptial stage, the stage of activity, in-

main doctrines respecting the innermost nature of mind as will, and the subordination of intellect to will.

volving the order of time, as well as the multiplicity and individuality of things. Not only is each of these transitions a pure fancy resting on nothing but an airy foundation, but its comprehension demands a considerable effort of thought, and the last especially appears to me about as inconceivable a moment as any in Schopenhauer's system.

It strikes one, further, that in Hartmann's system there is no proper co-ordination of the different wills which are said to be discoverable in the world, namely the one substantial will, the will of the species, the will of the individual, and the atomic wills of material objects. First of all, the place which the Unconscious, conceived as noumenon, fills in the scheme is extremely obscure. With Schopenhauer the will as *Ding an sich* is said to be the one reality embracing and constituting the essence of all material objects, though it must be conceded that the author is guilty of inconsistency with respect to this as well as to the other leading ideas of his system.[1] With Hartmann the Unconscious is constantly spoken of as distinct from the forces of the material world, as breaking in on them, and as modifying their action in numerous particulars. As has been well said by Herr Vaihinger,[2] one of the ablest critics of Hartmann I have met with, this is, in fact, to cede monism in favour of dualism. In the second place, one is quite at a loss to understand the distinction and relation between the providential will of the species and that of the individual in Hartmann's system. It looks, indeed, as if Hartmann, in his anxiety to account for the world-process or the dynamic

[1] Hartmann criticises Schopenhauer's doctrine of intelligible individual character as incompatible with the idea of the substantial unity of the world, and of the illusory nature of individual appearances ('Philosophie des Unbewussten,' section C, chap. xi.).

[2] See his interesting work, 'Hartmann, Dühring, und Lange.'

aspect of existence, had neglected to explain its statical side, that is to say, the relations holding together the various co-operating factors of the coexistent universe.

Once more, Hartmann, in accepting the reality of time and of the process of things as held together by causation, assumes the obligation of accounting for consciousness, a duty from which Schopenhauer supposed he had escaped. How, then, does he succeed with this rather perplexing problem? His deduction of consciousness appears to me to be one of the weakest semblances of explanation. Consciousness arises through the rupture of the quiescence of the individual will by the unwilled or unbidden intrusion of a sensation. But how, it may be asked, is this sensation to be conceived as arising before, or at least independently of, consciousness? It is clearly not any form of unconscious representation, for this is regarded as bidden, or at least controlled, by will. In truth, it is itself the first manifestation of consciousness. Thus the genesis of consciousness, here as elsewhere, is only made to wear the appearance of *à priori* conceivability by help of a covert assumption of its pre-existence.

If we pass to Hartmann's conception of the world-process in its origin, progress, and cessation, we must admit that his theory is ingenious and sometimes subtle. Yet a closer inspection will show, not only that it draws on the wildest freaks of fancy, but also that it involves a number of plain contradictions. Of the mythological character of the doctrine of creation it is not necessary to speak. The unconscious will, which is for ever hungry, and so an infinite torment to itself, is a good illustration of Hartmann's tendency to anthropomorphise his abstractions.[1] So, again,

[1] See Herr Vaihinger's work, p. 129.

the process by which the empty will is determined to existence through its nuptial union with the accommodating representation is a sufficiently difficult conception. Apart from the mythical character of the process,[1] how can it be thought out at all? Is it the will that resolves to free itself from the infinite hunger? No, for Hartmann tells us the action of will is blind, it is led by the *Vorstellung* whither it knows not. It must therefore be the *Vorstellung* which resolves to deliver the will, and much of Hartmann's language distinctly implies this. If so, however, is the *Vorstellung* any longer something simply intellectual or logical, and not rather a form of will itself? This shows how impossible it is consistently to hypostatise mental abstractions like volition and intellect. Both intellect and will with Hartmann necessarily involve activity, and activity towards an end. In fact, the difference between the two is that in the one anthropomorphic conception the attribute of volition is chiefly accented, in the other that of thought.

If we turn to the description of the close of the cosmic process, the mysteries do not disappear. The supposition of a will divided into two equal portions, an unconscious and a conscicus, and so brought to a standstill, is certainly an ingenious conception. But how, it will naturally be asked, is quantity to be measured in this case, or how are we to be sure that the amount of conscious will can ever reach the apparently constant quantity of physical will in the

[1] Vaihinger well says of it that it 'accomplishes the most incredible feat in anthropomorphic hypostatising and mythological personification, and just for this reason is well pleasing to the vulgar curiosity of the naïve populace' (*op. cit.* p. 131). The anthropomorphism of the Unconscious is dealt with in a pleasantly satirical way by J. C. Fischer in a work entitled, 'Hartmann's Philosophie des Unbewussten, ein Schmerzensschrei des gesunden Menschenverstandes.'

universe? This it must be evident, is a point of vital importance in relation to the practical doctrine that we are to co-operate in hastening on the cessation of existence. And then, what must be said as to the mathematical proof by which we are encouraged to hope that the miserable round of cosmic events will not be repeated *ad infinitum?* It is really impossible to deal quite seriously with this part of Hartmann's argument. There is a *naïveté* in this extension of the doctrine of chances to such a remote ontological problem which produces a distinctly comical effect. A man who can draw comfort out of such shadowy material is plainly not destined to be a pessimist. Must we not say that Hartmann has clearly mistaken his vocation when he echoes Schopenhauer's laments about the misery of life?

Having thus briefly and very inadequately touched on some of the most striking examples of logical incoherence and of arbitrary hypothesis in the systems of the two leading pessimists, I propose to turn from the metaphysical aspects of the question, and to attend for the future exclusively to its scientific aspects. In relation to this side of the problem, too, we may best begin with Schopenhauer and Hartmann, whose method professes to be rigidly scientific as well as metaphysical, and who have for the first time attempted to give a precise and systematically reasoned solution of the question from the pessimist side. If, as I hope, I shall succeed in showing the emptiness of this proof of pessimism, it will be necessary to inquire whether any other way of reaching a solution of the question is open to us, and how far in the present state of our knowledge a definite answer is to be looked for.

In dealing with the pessimist's argument, it will be well to discuss first of all the scientific or *à priori* proof, which

rests partly on a conception of the physical world, partly on certain psychological suppositions. After this we may look into the *à posteriori* or empirical proof, mainly elaborated by Hartmann, which consists in showing by means of an induction of facts that pain exceeds pleasure in human life.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF PESSIMISM: (A) THE PESSIMISTS' INTERPRETATION OF PHYSICAL NATURE.

THE pessimism both of Schopenhauer and of Hartmann is based on the conception of will as the reality of the world. This idea, though in its state of complete formation a metaphysical one, is during the earlier stages of its formation a scientific one. Both Schopenhauer and Hartmann profess to ground their ontological reality on the data of science, and both consider it to be inferrible from the known facts of science that will extends through the whole region of phenomena. The examination of this position is, then, the first part of our task in estimating the scientific basis of pessimism.

For the present I do not inquire what will is, and how far the pessimist's conception of it is a correct one. I assume that by will is meant the spring or source, or one of the springs or sources, of conscious action as discoverable in our own minds, and I only ask whether this commonly understood will is traceable in the facts and laws of the physical world.

Now, the first thing that staggers one in this extension of the idea of will to inanimate nature is that will is an element of the conscious mind, whereas purely physical phenomena are not viewed as having consciousness. Scho-

penhauer and Hartmann both see this difficulty and seek to remove it by the hypothesis of an unconscious will, of a will that is outside and below all consciousness. The question, therefore, now becomes: Is there any such thing as an unconscious mental phenomenon: are there any facts resembling those of our conscious minds so far as to be called mental, which yet lack the element of consciousness?

In order to answer this question we must determine what is meant by mind and what by consciousness. By mind, in its scientific sense, is meant our several states of feeling, thought, and volition, all the facts, changes, and processes, which we mark off from those of the extended material world, and of which we are said to be conscious. This point seems to be clear enough. We can never feel any hesitation in calling a sensation of pain or an inspiring idea something mental, or a movement of a tree, or the vibrations of light, something physical. But are we always conscious of mental changes or events? This leads us to examine what is meant by consciousness.

There is one view of consciousness, often put forward, which seems to be specially favourable to the supposition of unconscious mental phenomena. According to this theory, consciousness is distinct from the various contents of the mind, its feelings, desires, &c. Consciousness is to the sensations and thoughts of our minds as the eye to the moving world outside it. It is essentially a knowing or recognising of something, and this process of cognition is explained as the recognition of the particular feeling or other mental state as my state, as a modification of the conscious subject or Ego. Thus, there is such a thing as a sensation of sweet taste, and also the consciousness of this sensation as a feeling of which I am the subject. On this supposition,

it is easy to imagine that the mental event may pass unnoticed by the 'eye' of consciousness, whether from its fleeting duration or from the pre-occupation of the visual organ. In other words, the feeling may exist, but not be recognised as mine, and so lie outside the boundaries of consciousness properly so called.

Of course, it is possible to give what meaning we like to a word, provided it still covers all the facts commonly denoted by it. Applying this test, we shall find, I think, that consciousness cannot be regarded as the same as self-consciousness,[1] as the mind's knowledge of its own modifications as such. This interpretation may suit some of the facts: it does not answer to others. For example, I am suffering from the violent pangs of tooth-ache. At this moment there is nothing like a consciousness of self contained in the mental state. The only element of cognition discoverable is a vague sense that the present feeling is one of pain of a particular intensity. The only thing existing at this moment, so far as I can make out, is a feeling of pain, together with this nascent intellectual activity. Am I, then, unconscious? No one, I fancy, would be bold enough to make the affirmation. So, again, when I am wholly 'lost' in the beauty of a sunset, there is in the mental content of the moment no self-consciousness, no recognition of a subject underlying the present group of feelings and thoughts. Am I, then, unconscious? Certainly not. It must be plain, from these illustrations, that it is impossible to make consciousness synonymous with that complex form of intellectual activity known as self-consciousness. Consciousness may be almost

[1] The very coexistence of the two terms, consciousness and self-consciousness, seems to point to a distinction between the things denoted by them.

wholly emotional, with only the faintest discoverable trace of cognitive activity; or, again, it may be intellectual, but wholly objective, in which case the element of self-consciousness is equally suppressed. The knowledge of a mental state as my state is something non-essential to feeling and to what we call consciousness.[1]

So much for the attempt to make consciousness co-extensive with self-consciousness. There is another view of consciousness, which also, at first sight, tends to make it narrower than mind, and which is certainly more plausible than the doctrine just examined. This is the theory that consciousness is synonymous with *attention*. The problem of attention is one of the most interesting of the many unsolved questions of psychology, and when its nature is properly understood, it will undoubtedly tend to clear up what is meant by consciousness in its various meanings. It may be admitted at once that attention is the common meaning of the term conscious when used in a loose and popular way. 'I was quite unconscious of the interruption,' means, when closely examined, 'I did not attend to it.' 'The impression reached my mind, but did not call off my attention from the object which engaged it at the moment.' Now, this view of consciousness seems at once to point to a distinction between a mental event and the direction of consciousness to it, and so between a mental event and consciousness. But is this necessarily involved in the distinction? I think not. There are two conceivable views of attention. According to one, attention embraces all

[1] For a fuller illustration of this position see Mr. Bain's clear and masterly discussion of consciousness ('The Emotions and the Will,' p. 539 *seq.*). The complexity of the idea of self, which is an element of self-consciousness, is well shown in M. Taine's skilful analysis ('De l'Intelligence,' livre troisième, chapitre premier).

simultaneously-recurring mental states, though with very unequal degrees of force, there being always some point of fixation, so to speak, some sensation or thought which engages a supreme measure of attention.[1] This view has much to support it. Internal observation may discover in the case of the most obscure idea, lurking in the outer zones of the mind, the direction of a certain faint measure of attention, even though this be an exceedingly rapid and fugitive process. If this view is sound, then it obviously follows that consciousness, even when conceived as attention, is as extensive as mental life itself.

This interpretation, however, may be objected to, as unusual and extreme. Let us, then, take the more common view that attention covers but a limited area of the whole mental field present at any given moment; the central regions being highly illuminated, the outer regions becoming darker and darker till we reach a wholly invisible territory. This view, it may be said, surely assumes the existence of sensations and other mental events out of consciousness. No doubt, in the popular sense of the term. But do those who speak in this way really mean that everything lying outside the circle forming, so to speak, the base of the cone of this attention is absolutely unconscious? I think not. For how are we to conceive the voluntary direction of attention to an object in this dark region if there is absolutely no consciousness of it? Careful reflection will show that an impression or idea, when unattended to, still forms an ingredient of our consciousness. The mind is dimly aware

[1] I do not here go into the curious question what number of feelings or ideas can be simultaneously embraced by attention. It should be remembered that what we call simultaneous acts of attention commonly involve many swift alternations in the direction of this activity.

of it (though not necessarily as 'its own modification'), and so far it exists in consciousness. The vague teasing pain, for example, which the summer gnats are inflicting on the face and wrists of the landscape painter absorbed in his sketch, is, strictly speaking, felt, and so is an ingredient of consciousness, though it may be felt in the minimum degree because attention has been intensely occupied with other impressions.

Still, I imagine somebody saying, when one's attention is directed to one of these outlying mental states, it at once presents itself as something more real, more intense than before. Now, surely the act of attention did not give it this increased energy. Consequently, as this fully developed intense state, it must have existed out of consciousness. The argument is ingenious, but does not bear close scrutiny. Why are we not to accept the obvious suggestion of the facts that it is the act of attention which produces the increased intensity of the sensation or idea? So far as psychological observation and reflection are to guide us, attention is to be regarded as a condition of all intense mental life. This is illustrated in the familiar fact that whenever an impression reaches a certain degree of force [1] it engages attention by a reflex process quite independently of our volitions. Even if the faintest degrees of our sensations may exist without any action of attention, this action is a joint condition of all the higher degrees. A sensation of sound exists only so far as I attend to it, and in the absence of all attention (if this is possible) it exists simply as a nascent shadowy thing, as the dim boundary of my conscious life.

[1] This degree is not, of course, a constant quantity, but varies in the direct ratio of the degree of mental preoccupation.

The result of this brief inquiry into the meaning of the terms mind and consciousness appears to be that though in one and a loose sense of the term consciousness mental events may be said to be outside consciousness, in another and a stricter sense of the word all that is mental is at the same time an element of consciousness. In other words, a feeling or idea may be relatively 'unconscious' (when unattended to) but never absolutely so. If this is the correct view of the matter it must be a contradiction to speak of mental processes wholly destitute of the quality or aspect of consciousness.

Still the reader may urge that, in spite of psychological analyses and definitions, modern science affirms the existence of wholly unconscious processes in our mental life. Indirectly, if not directly, we reach the existence of these events. In external perception, for example, there are processes of inference of which we are wholly unaware. The conclusions which we are every day drawing as to the distance and magnitudes of objects, the processes of ideation involved in many of the so-called optical illusions, all these are carried on too rapidly for consciousness. They are called by so great an authority as Helmholtz 'unconscious inferences' (*unbewusste Schlüsse*).[1] So, again, physiological science tells us that our seemingly elementary sensations are in reality combinations or mental syntheses. According to

[1] Helmholtz is not very confident in affirming the existence of unconscious *mental* operations, in the strict sense of the phrase. He tells us that he chooses the name 'unconscious inferences' for the processes of visual perception because *in their result* they are precisely similar to conscious reasonings. For the rest he appears to mean by unconscious mental operations those which 'do not stand under the rule of our self-consciousness and our will.' These include the processes of ideal reproduction according to the laws of association. (See 'Physiologische Optik,' pp. 430, 448, 449, and 804.)

the celebrated researches of Helmholtz a musical tone is in truth a consonance of several elements. Yet of these elements and their synthesis we are wholly unconscious. It is no good, it will be urged, to say to these facts that they contradict our fundamental psychological conceptions. If so, then so much the worse for the conceptions, which must be re-shaped in conformity with the facts. Hartmann makes great use of these teachings of modern science, and it will be necessary, therefore, for a moment to look at the question on this side.

First of all, then, as to the processes of inference which are too rapid and faint to impress consciousness, I cheerfully admit that they lie outside consciousness.[1] But, then, are they *mental* events at all? That there are *cerebral*, that is physical, processes involved here is fairly certain; but that these are accompanied with anything mental is a wholly gratuitous supposition, and, since it contradicts our radical psychological conceptions, is to be rejected. I do not here enter into the ultimate meaning of the relation between body and mind. Even if there be a spiritual substance, it is admitted that this may make use of the bodily mechanism as its instrument in the elementary processes of sensation and bodily movement; and, if so, I can see no objection to the supposition that it may fill up blanks in its most mature activity by means of strictly bodily processes in the so-called secondary automatic actions, such as walking, reading, and I may add, external perception. But a spiritual substance cannot be affirmed by science any more than a material. And looking on mental and bodily

[1] It may be well to observe, however, that, as Mill has shown, the fact of not remembering a mental process does not demonstrate its non-existence as a nascent fugitive mental operation.

processes simply as phenomenal events, there is not a shadow of a reason to suppose anything in these 'unconscious inferences' besides nervous processes, which through their frequent repetition have reached so great an ease and rapidity of execution as to fall below the limit of the necessary physical conditions of mental change.[1]

Let us now glance, for a moment, at the other order of facts in favour of unconscious mental states, namely, the complex structure of our seemingly simple sensations. A clang (I retain Helmholtz's useful term in spite of Mr. Ellis's objection), is made up of a number of partial tones, each of which would amount to a sensation. Hence, it is argued, in the sensation of clang there are present in the mind elements of which we are unconscious. But how, it may be retorted, do we know that they are *now* present? All that observation tells us is that a sum of nervous conditions which when separated have peculiar mental effects has, in its collective state, a new and wholly unlike effect. Or, if we choose to put it another way and to say that these single effects blend in a new effect, it is still inexact to speak of these effects as individually present in the mind, since distinct individuality in a mental event must be taken as implying certain negative conditions, namely, the absence at the same instant of other states fitted to blend with it. But, says an objector, according to Helmholtz, the elements may be picked out and recognised after practice. To this I would answer that the fact here referred to is but an illustration that a concentration of attention is a condition of distinct mental life, and that the elevation of a particular

[1] It matters not for our present purpose whether these repetitions are confined to the life of the individual, or must be interpreted as extending through the collective experience of the race.

partial tone into the region of clear discriminating consciousness is here in part the product of an act of attention.

Still, urges our objector, how is attention to fasten on the particular element of a sensation if it had as yet no existence in the mind? There are two conceivable ways in which this may happen. First of all, the physical process underlying attention may accidentally direct itself to the particular central area involved in the partial sensation, and thus raise its intensity to the needful height. Secondly, the nervous process involved in the partial impression may reach the limit of consciousness previously to a voluntary act of attention. The means by which this intensification of a particular factor of a complex nervous process is effected is the co-operation of a pre-existing idea, or more correctly, the central nervous process which is the correlate of the idea. Helmholtz emphasises the need of a clear anticipation of the particular sensation of tone desired. This is but one illustration of the way in which pre-existing ideas help to condition the rise of a physical impression into the region of consciousness.

Exactly the same line of reasoning applies to the theory that a sensation is compounded of a sequence of elements, of the vaguest mental states or 'nervous shocks.' To say that the feeling belonging to each of these shocks (supposing there is such a feeling) is present in the mind during a sensation is to beg the whole question. Accurate observation leads only to the conclusion that individual mental states have their minimum limit of duration, and when this is not reached in the underlying nervous process they blend in one whole indecomposable state.

I would contend, then, that modern science, physiological as well as psychological, is unable to advance any

proof of unconscious elements or processes in the human mind.[1] Such proof is, indeed, in the very nature of the case, unattainable. Its semblance can only be offered by means of some latent metaphysical conception, as that mind is a substance which must always be active. But if our view is the correct one, it follows that the contradiction we have previously seen to be involved in all attempts to conceive mind as wider than consciousness must be held to be valid against any extension of mind into the region of unconscious physical events. For such extension directly contradicts the first conceptions of mind as formed from the only mental phenomena directly observable by us. This is what

[1] Since this was written my attention has been called to an able refutation of the hypothesis of unconscious mental operations by Dr. Franz Brentano ('Psychologie,' Book II. ch. ii.). The author, who directs his arguments more especially against Hartmann, contends that such unconscious mental events are inferrible neither as causes of later conscious phenomena (as in rapid chains of reasoning), nor as the effects of physical processes which do not affect consciousness (as in the case emphasised by Sir W. Hamilton, namely, the operation of sensory stimuli whose intensity falls below the threshold of conscious sensation). The reader will see that the argument in the text follows much the same line, though I gladly admit that Dr. Brentano has the advantage of me with respect to the classification of the arguments.

Among other recent discussions of this question, the reader may be referred to Wundt ('Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie,' cap. 18), Maudsley ('The Physiology of Mind,' especially p. 94 *seq.* and p. 241 *seq.*), and G. H. Lewes ('The Physical Basis of Mind,' problem iii. ch. iv.). Mr. Lewes seems clearly enough to exclude the idea of mental life absolutely destitute of consciousness. He would reserve the term 'unconscious' for the vague undiscriminated mass of feeling (sentience) which he regards as the correlate of a large part of the nervous processes of the moment. How far Mr. Lewes is right in saying that all nervous action (neurility) has its subjective side (feeling or sentience), is a nice question which does not specially concern us here. So far as I understand the writer, all such subjective phenomena do somehow affect consciousness, even though they are not differentiated into distinct sensations.

both Schopenhauer and Hartmann distinctly and professedly seek to accomplish, and their procedure is thus condemned *ab initio*.[1]

[1] Every earnest psychologist must deeply regret the mischief wrought by this idea of unconscious mental processes in contemporary psychology, together with the dependent science of æsthetics. It must be evident that this idea is exactly fitted to play the part of a *deus ex machinâ*, whenever we are ignorant of the facts and yet unwilling to wait for real light. For, after all, a resort to this hypothesis does but proclaim the writer's ignorance of facts, while the unverifiable nature of the hypothesis —which consideration of itself should warn off the true friends of science —allows of every kind of intellectual prank in this territory. Readers of contemporary German literature, especially æsthetic criticism, will not need illustrations of the darkening influences of this idea.

A striking example of the thoroughly unscientific character of this resort to unconscious mental processes is to be found in Hartmann's account of the sexual emotion. Following Schopenhauer, he first of all seeks to surround the phenomenon to be accounted for with a factitious halo of mystery. The impulse which makes a lover choose a particular individual, and erect the same into an object of absorbing passion, is said to be something too vast, too profound, to be accounted for by conscious motives, even when aided by a powerful bodily instinct. (By the way, Hartmann and Schopenhauer alike give a most inaccurate version of the action of the amatory passion, as when they state that people invariably choose those who are physically and morally complementary to themselves.) Thus, a miracle is constructed out of a phenomenon which admits, even in the present state of our psychological and biological knowledge, of a properly natural and scientific explanation. Accordingly, we must have a worker of miracles in the shape of the Unconscious, which is always conveniently waiting behind phenomena, and is ready to appear at a moment's notice. The fact of a man's choosing a particular woman as his lover is too profound a mystery to be cleared up by properly psychological considerations, such as individual tastes, acquired and inherited, the effects of early associations, the varying impressibility of the emotional mind at different seasons and under different circumstances, and so on. It must be referred to the magical influence of an unconscious purpose, namely, the intention to create a new, complete, and typical member of the species. Common sense naturally asks how many children conform to this perfect type? also, how far the particular direction of love is, after all, a matter of accident as far as the lover is concerned? But Hartmann, like Schopenhauer, sees in the movements of this passion a fine subject for his supernatural and occult mode of

Thus far I have spoken of consciousness on its subjective side, as that which constitutes my present and immediate mental experience. But there is another and familiar meaning of the term. We may look on mind in a larger and objective aspect as an aggregate of mental states, extending in time, and may call this totality a consciousness. Viewed in this way, it presents itself as a series of phenomena which takes the form of a gradual development from the simple, vague, and homogeneous, to the multiform, definite, and heterogeneous.

In this order every particular thought and feeling is seen to be a product of the previous events of the process, and only exists in this connection. That is to say, every mental event is said to be in consciousness in the sense that it forms a link in a continuous chain of mental development. This continuity and unity of consciousness is viewed as connected with a definite physical aggregate, namely, a cerebral and nervous structure in a living organism.

This being so, we can only infer the existence of mental events in nature where we find this serial order and continuity. We reason to the existence not of stray isolated thoughts or feelings, but of collective minds, however rudimentary these may be. Leaving for the present the question how far we are justified in inferring the existence of analogues of such streams of consciousness in the world around us, we see that, if we would avoid contradiction, we must not infer the presence of detached mental events where we cannot also infer the existence of a serial mental life.

Now these conditions of reasoning are quite overlooked by Schopenhauer and Hartmann. The latter more espe-

'explanation,' and common sense must not dare intrude itself into the dim religious light of this region.

cially reasons to single volitions and previsions in the obscure regions of our bodily organism and elsewhere without stopping to inquire whether such mental events are conceivable apart from a whole developing consciousness. So, again, his resolution of an atomic force into something quasi-mental involves the fallacy that mental life occurs in the absence of all the conditions of differentiation and aggregation, such as we find in the human brain. In other words, there is in each of these forces nothing but one unchanging mental phenomenon, without any of those successions, alternations, and 'groupings' which are the conditions of the genesis of any mental phenomenon.

We see, then, that Hartmann falls into a double contradiction, when in his characteristic careless fashion he picks up unconscious mental fragments in all parts of the physical *terrain*. First of all, in that he talks about unconscious mind at all, secondly in that he speaks of unconscious mental events as wholly detached from, and independent of, a collective mind or a developing consciousness.

And now let us glance at the nature of the 'evidence' which Schopenhauer and Hartmann bring forward in favour of these single manifestations of mind in physical nature. One must suppose that this evidence is of the very strongest when it is accepted in the face of the contradictions just pointed out. Is this really the case?

The material or atomic forces of nature, say these writers, are resolvable into attractions and repulsions. But we cannot conceive these processes except as modes of volition, that is to say, as a kind of striving after something. Schopenhauer rightly says that 'force' is something wholly mysterious and can only be made a reality by being envisaged as will. But what if science, properly so called,

does not assert the existence of such a thing as force any more than it asserts the existence of matter? In science 'force' is simply a term which groups together a certain class of phenomena, such as electrical, chemical, and so on. These phenomena are supposed to be reducible to movement as their common substratum. But movement itself is as much a phenomenon as an impression of heat or light. An atomic force stands for nothing but one series of these phenomena, and it makes no difference to the essential character of such atomic processes that they lie outside the limits of our sensuous perception. For they are still conceived in terms of sensible impressions, nor would they be significant ideas at all if they had not this foundation.[1]

But, it will be urged, the forces of physical sciences mean something more than actual movement. The force of repulsion, for instance, is said to exist even when the movements of repulsion are counteracted by external pressure. In other words, force means, in addition to actual movement, tendency to movement. No doubt. But what is 'tendency' but a pure fiction? All that observation tells me is that certain movements follow on certain conditions. When these conditions are not realised, I invent something over and above the movement itself, and try to give it real existence. In truth, however, this tendency is nothing but a projection into the region of objective existence of a certain prevision in my mind, the assurance that movement of a similar kind will reappear when the negative conditions are again realised. This fiction is of great use in science, provided always that it be recognised as a fiction.

[1] See the distinction drawn by Mr. G. H. Lewes between the 'extra-sensible' and the 'supra-sensible' ('Problems of Life and Mind,' vol. i. prob. i. ch. iii.).

Thus, in the great discovery of the present generation, the principle of the conservation of energy, the tendencies to movement are conjoined with the actual movement and their sum affirmed to be constant. But this principle no more involves the supposition of force as a real entity than the conception of tendency involves a present occult entity.[1]

In truth, then, science cannot affirm the existence of any dynamic reality, so that it offers no ground for the construction of will in nature. I grant that if force were proved to be a reality in the physical world, we should, by the very limitations of our minds, be compelled to think of it in terms of our volitions. But since it is, in science proper, nothing but a serviceable fiction, it cannot be made the basis of any such inference as Hartmann seeks to draw from it. If attraction and repulsion mean nothing but movement in given directions and our prevision of such movement, it is the consummation of fallacy to argue that they necessarily involve 'striving' and 'longing.'[2]

[1] The opposite supposition, that physical science teaches the existence of an entity, force, clearly arises from a confusion of the functions of science and metaphysic. The most remarkable expression of this confusion known to me is to be met with in a recent work by Professor Birks entitled 'Modern Physical Fatalism.' In this volume (p. 137 *seq.*) it is said, 'It is in the region of the noumenon, and not the phenomenon, ... of things, and not sensations, ... of localised forces, and not of outward appearances, ... that the chief discoveries of modern physics have their native home.' And then the writer goes on to assert that it was when Newton no longer confined his view to phenomena, but directed his attention to the noumenal forces underlying these, 'that the greatest step of advance was made in the progress of physical science which had ever occurred from the beginning of time.'

[2] The existence of will in inanimate nature can thus never be supported by science. If maintained at all, it must be on grounds which are metaphysical, not scientific. The common ground of affirmation is that in the resistance made by an external object to my bodily effort the existence of will-force other than my own is immediately intuited. This

So much, then, for the scientific evidence in favour of the existence of volitional processes such as striving and longing in the inorganic world. Does it fare any better with the proof of these isolated manifestations of will in the organic world? Here will assumes a less vague form, and, assisted by mental representation or prevision, is to be envisaged as a process of definite intention. In the repair of tissue, for example, we see, according to Hartmann, the action of such definite intention; so in the growth of the organism, the processes of reproduction, and so on.

As an example of Hartmann's mode of reasoning, I cannot do better than select the peculiar theory of motor innervation already referred to. In willing to move my little finger we must suppose, says Hartmann, that in addition to the conscious volition which acts on the cerebrum there is an unconscious volition acting on the point, P, in the cerebellum or medulla whence the motor nerve issues (why not also in the still lower motor centre in the spinal cord?), and this unconscious act manifestly involves a representation of the point, P, to be acted on. What, it may be asked, must be said of the 'science' here resorted to? This highly original view of voluntary movement is put forward as a means of escaping from a supposed difficulty, namely, the fact that in volition there is no knowledge of motor nerve or muscle, that the whole content of the mind in volition is the movement itself. But is this difficulty a real one? Certainly not. All that we need to assume, in

has recently been defended with much ardour in a very curious work entitled, 'Philosophy without Assumptions,' by the Rev. T. P. Kirkman. Into this side of the question I cannot enter, as it obviously lies outside the scope of science properly so-called. The logical value of the argument is, I conceive, adequately dealt with by J. S. Mill in his 'Logic,' book iii. chap. v. § 9.

order to understand the sequence of a definite movement on a definite volition, is that the mental process should be connected with the excitation of some central area, which involves as its physical consequence the outward discharge of motor energy towards the particular muscle or muscles concerned.[1] If this is all that is required, why should it be necessary for volition to excite immediately the secondary starting-point of the motor nerve in the lower centre, when its excitation is the proper physical consequence of an excitation of the area of conscious volition itself, namely, certain elements in the anterior region of the cerebrum? Hartmann says there are no conceivable mechanical connections by which this indirect excitation could be effected. But this statement simply illustrates the author's ignorance respecting the newest researches in physiology, as also his readiness to put forth negative propositions which, in the nature of the case, do not admit of proof.

It is difficult to suppose that Hartmann is serious in maintaining that he is here placing himself on scientific grounds, seeing that it is the very spirit of contemporary biological science that it aims at eliminating the teleological point of view and at reducing all the problems of organic development to mechanical principles. You may quarrel with modern science for its presumption in supposing that it can ever express vital processes in terms of movement, and so bring them under mechanical laws; but it is absurd to say that you are proceeding scientifically as long as you

[1] The question of the action of mind on body is not involved here, since the volitional process itself may be conceived as the concomitant of a simultaneous cerebral process. Further, I do not here inquire what is the precise content of volitional consciousness, and how far the actual motor innervation is preceded by a representation of the feelings accompanying motor innervation and muscular contraction.

place yourselves outside the standing-ground of modern science. Science may fail; then metaphysic or something else may step in and fill up the gap. Whatever it be, however, it will be something very different in its method and logical value from what we now mean by science.[1]

The present relation of science to the problem of design in nature is simply this:—The methods of biology seek to interpret all vital processes as movements which, however complicated, obey the universal laws of physical movement. The method of evolution seeks to assign definite mechanical antecedents to the chain of movements implied in individual growth and development. Also it propounds a properly mechanical explanation of the origin of the various forms of organic life. In doing this, moreover, it attempts to account for those numerous adaptations of structure to function, which were previously regarded as wholly inexplicable, by the principle of physical causation. Thus it is the distinct

[1] The thoroughly unscientific character of Hartmann's procedure appears in almost a startling light in his forced attempt to apply the calculus of probabilities to the problem of accounting for organic effects. Suppose we have to account for a given phenomenon, M. Let $\frac{1}{x}$ represent the probability that it is produced by some material cause; then the probability of a mental cause is $1-\frac{1}{x}$. Now, if we are unable to find a material or mechanical cause, $\frac{1}{x}$ becomes an infinitesimal quantity, and so the alternative probability approximates to unity, which stands for certainty. The cool assumption that the biologist has a choice between material and mental causes, and the further assumption that the fact of our present ignorance of the material cause of a phenomenon makes the existence of such a cause infinitely improbable, sufficiently indicate Hartmann's qualifications as an exponent of science. For a scathing exposure of the unscientific nature of this teleological reasoning, and of its essential unity with the crude superstitious inferences of the savage, see Lange's 'Geschichte des Materialismus,' book ii. part ii. chap. iv., 'Darwinismus und Teleologie.'

problem of modern physiological science to reduce all the facts of life to the play of mechanical forces.

But, again, the great doctrine of the conservation of energy, carried out to its logical results, has led to the theory of animal and human automatism, namely, that all the actions of our bodily organs, voluntary as well as involuntary, are fully explained as the results of mechanical processes. According to this view, consciousness is not an essential link in the chain of physical events making up our bodily life. Seeing, hearing, talking, walking, even the very cerebral processes underlying thought, would all go on just the same were there no such thing as a conscious mind present. It follows from this idea that mind can never be a necessary inference in any region of the physical world. It is not required as a cause of any discovered movement. It cannot, properly speaking, be seen to be a necessary effect of any group of movements. At best it can only be inferred on the ground of analogy, when there presents itself a group of conditions resembling those which appear to sustain our own consciousness.

Such being the present attitude of science, it must be confessed that Hartmann's attempts to base his random 'discoveries' of intuition in inanimate nature on science and induction is about as startling an anachronism as one could well find in the history of thought. In truth, his method, so far from being 'inductive,' is as unscientific as that of any of the teleologists of a bygone century. It rests wholly on the fancied discovery in a physical process of some vague resemblance to conscious human action, and is as much anthropomorphism as the earliest and crudest religious ideas of the external world. Even when the author seems to go to work with

something of a scientific spirit, as in criticising Darwinism, the predominance of anti-scientific ideas is continually forcing itself on the reader's attention. The whole argument is, indeed, a kind of *petitio principii*: natural selection, &c., cannot account for morphological changes, for the upward direction of development, and so on, just because these require the action of will.

It follows from what has been said before that if the mental is to be affirmed in the physical world it must be as a conscious aggregate, that is, as a collective individual mind. How far the method of analogy, which, as we have seen, is all that we can here avail ourselves of, will carry us in informing material objects with conscious life is a nice question about which science is as yet silent. It may, perhaps, be regarded as certain that we shall never project the region of consciousness beyond the boundaries of nervous organisation. Still we do not as yet know what these are. Finer instruments may reveal a rudimentary nervous apparatus in plants; and there is nothing absurd in the supposition that with growing knowledge we may be led to conjecture the presence of something like such an apparatus even in the structures of the inorganic world. Into this question, however, our present inquiry hardly leads us. Schopenhauer and Hartmann care nothing about the limits of conscious life. What they want is a trace of a single volition, or current of volition, at this or at that point. On this fragile foundation they can build their ontological edifice, their all-embracing will. The thing to be emphasised here is that all such inference differs *toto cœlo* from the procedure by analogy proper, which infers as a probability something answering to human consciousness wherever there

presents itself an adequate material substratum for those processes of segregation and aggregation, in which, as we have seen, consciousness consists.[1]

[1] In giving an account of Hartmann's doctrine in the 'Fortnightly Review,' a few months ago, I wrote: 'The completeness of Hartmann's failure to establish his extra-conscious mind on a foundation of physiological science, may be seen, perhaps, in the fact that no man of scientific reputation has cared to deal with his arguments, whereas men of no great scientific power have not only attempted to upset Hartmann's position, but have really succeeded in doing so. We refer especially to the rather loose but effective attack made by Dr. Stiebeling in his "Naturwissenschaft gegen Philosophie," which a disciple of Hartmann has thought it well to answer step by step; and to the strictures made on Hartmann's scientific conclusions by W. Tobias in his work, "Die Grenzen der Philosophie." A much more thoughtful demonstration of the untenability of Hartmann's biological assumptions, and of their essentially unscientific nature, may be found in a work entitled "Das Unbewusste vom Standpunkt der Physiologie und Descendenztheorie" (Berlin, 1872).'

In the last work it is suggested that a good part of Hartmann's system was put together before the author had studied Darwin. To this it must now be added that Hartmann's qualifications as a student of natural science have been just tested by no less an authority in biological science than Professor Oscar Schmidt. In a little volume entitled 'Die naturwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen der Philosophie des Unbewussten,' Schmidt examines the basis of natural science which Hartmann boasts of having given to his system, and the result is sufficiently disastrous to Hartmann's pretensions. The critic proves that Hartmann has again and again resorted to writers on biological subjects now recognised as valueless, just as though they were on a level with the latest authorities. He further fastens on Hartmann a number of inaccuracies as to statement of fact which prove that his scientific reading must have been one-sided and hasty. Finally, in an able review of Hartmann's whole method of interpreting biological phenomena, as growth, reproduction, and the development of species, Schmidt brings to light the essentially unscientific character of Hartmann's stand-point. He charges Hartmann with credulity and even an inclination to superstition, and affirms that by the supernatural mechanism of his Unconscious he simply manages 'to cover with a word an incorrectly observed phenomenon, or what is unknown, that is, not yet sufficiently investigated.' Particularly able is Schmidt's answer to Hartmann's attack on Darwinism. To quote the critic's own concluding words:

'The "Philosophy of the Unconscious" lays claim to possessing a

principle standing above those of the natural sciences, to contemplating the world from the height of modern research, and to having gained, according to the inductive method, results which extend beyond the knowledge of science.

'We have proved that the "Philosophy of the Unconscious" has not been equal to sifting the facts and data which are at its service, to distinguishing what is doubtful from what is accepted as certain, what is a false interpretation from what is a natural one; nay, that, for the sake of a principle handed down from the past, it sacrificed progress to obsolete theories which have been overpowered by natural science.

'Thus, to its induction there is wanting the first condition, exactness of the assumptions out of which the combination is to be made, and the general laws and principles are to be inferred. The latter, therefore, have no claim on our recognition any more than the deductive conclusions.

'The sciences of the organic world, which the "Philosophy of the Unconscious" wishes to take under its wings, decline its protection and even its comradeship. They suffice for themselves. They are so far natural philosophy as they independently, according to their method, draw conclusions respecting the causes and the connection of the phenomenal world.'

CHAPTER IX.

THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF PESSIMISM.

(B) THE PESSIMISTS' INTERPRETATION OF MIND.

In the foregoing chapter, which may appear to the reader as somewhat of a digression, I have sought to show that there is no scientific evidence for the existence of will as a moving principle in physical nature. So far as this attempt has succeeded, one side of the pessimists' scientific construction is undermined and destroyed. Even supposing that life's misery comes from will, we may at least comfort ourselves that this unhappy principle is not yet made out to be the essential nature of all physical things. At most it has a limited existence, and thus a way seems opened up for a possible reduction of evil to something like a moderate quantity.

But now comes another question: Is the will which is known as a factor of conscious minds what Schopenhauer and Hartmann take it to be; and if they have misinterpreted the facts, does this misinterpretation involve as its consequence the fallacious character of the proposition that will is even in ourselves the source of life's misery? Here we are going still deeper, and investigating the very foundations of scientific pessimism. In discussing this part of the pessimists' doctrine, I may very likely appear now and again to be reproducing trite psychological truths; yet, if it

be found that such truths have been completely overlooked by contemporary writers, it can hardly be superfluous to reaffirm them.

First of all, then, it is evident that both Schopenhauer and Hartmann mean by will something one and substantial, a single permanent substratum in the individual mind. In fact, will is as much an occult faculty or essence as it was in the cumbrous thought of the schoolmen. Now, it may not be unnecessary to remark that modern scientific psychology knows nothing of such an entity. As a science of phenomena and their laws, it confines itself to the consideration of processes of volition, and wholly discards the hypothesis of a substantial will as unnecessary and unscientific. In reviving this idea, the pessimists show that their method is really a metaphysical one, and that their numerous professions of an adherence to the ways of science are erroneous. The manner in which Schopenhauer assumes, without the least investigation of the matter, that by simple introspection we may reach a sub-phenomenal reality in the shape of will, is but one among many illustrations of the essentially amateur character of his science.[1] How, the bewildered reader may ask, is this entity reached? Not by ordinary perception, for this is confined to phenomena. Is it, then, a necessary inference from phenomena, an instinctive belief accompanying a perception, or what? Into such questions Schopenhauer does not care to go. At the very outset, where he seems to be seeking firm ground in the facts of psychology,

[1] That Schopenhauer was lacking in the essentials of the severe and moderate scientific spirit appears from numerous passages in the biography already referred to. His generalisations are often exceedingly hasty and flimsy, as, for example, that intellect comes from the mother and will from the father.

he is, in truth, quietly assuming the very ontological principle which has to be thus proved. He wants to conclude from the existence of volition in us that will is the principle of all things; he overlooks, however, the mediate link in the argument, namely, the transition from processes of volition to an entity underlying these processes.

Will being thus in science nothing but a sum of processes, the next point for consideration relates to the mental operations which may be rightly included under this term. A mere glance at the systems of Schopenhauer and Hartmann will suffice to show that with them the word covers all mental phenomena other than intellectual. They speak of will now as impulse, now as desire, now as passion, now as emotion. That is to say, they throw together the two regions of action and feeling, and thus substitute a twofold for a threefold division of mind. Here the antagonism between their method and that of modern science comes again yet more clearly into view. For all modern psychology sets out with the recognition of three fundamental activities or functions of mind, namely, feeling, intelligence, and action or volition, which, though never found in perfect separation from one another are logically distinguishable; and this important and fruitful division of the subject was emphasised by that very Kant from whom Schopenhauer, as we have seen, learnt so much.

These writers may appear to have grouped under one head the various emotional and volitional processes, on the ground that they include all the mental antecedents of bodily movement or external action. But even this narrow ground is untenable. For ideas are often as much an antecedent of movement as feeling or volition, as one may see in the well-known class of 'ideo-motor' phenomena which

include such movements as talking aloud, somnambulation, &c.

One need not, however, urge this objection, since the classing together of feeling and active impulse is in itself erroneous. Feeling, though it has its active side, in connection with volition, has also its purely passive side. In fact, feeling and active impulse are the two primitive and most strongly contrasted forms of mental life (intellect manifesting itself in later stages), and are perfectly co-ordinate, answering to the well-marked division in the nervous system of sensory and motor elements.

Will, or volition, is, then, wrongly conceived as including all emotional phenomena. But, once more, does volition, in its commonly accepted meaning, include all active impulses themselves, all the mental states which have no meaning except in reference to bodily movement? Surely not. Schopenhauer and Hartmann are forcing language when they thus try to heap together such perfectly distinct operations as instinctive and voluntary actions. For example, it is probable, as Mr. Bain argues, that there exists in the early mind a disposition to spontaneous movement, which is connected with the vigour of the motor apparatus. This impulse is, on its mental side, only definable in its first stage as a sense of discomfort when the appropriate movements are in any way impeded. Now, it is one thing to say that volition in its proper meaning is a growth out of these lower and instinctive impulses, another thing to efface the well-marked distinction between them. The only point they have in common is that they are in their nature tendencies to action; but this point of agreement is insignificant when compared with their points of difference; and, in any case, to extend a term which is properly confined to

one class, to all these unlike mental states, is wholly unjustifiable and utterly confusing.

It may be thought, perhaps, that I am here quarrelling with the pessimists about a mere term. But an incorrect use of terms may easily become the starting-point of serious error as to matters of fact. And so it will be found in this case. By hiding from view the essential differences between volition and lower action, by ignoring the characteristics of will properly so-called, the pessimist falls into the blunder of supposing that this will is the parent, instead of the natural and necessary foe, of life's misery.

What then, it may be asked, is it which marks off the instinctive impulses from volition proper? Nothing else than the very property which Schopenhauer and Hartmann regard as the common characteristic of both groups of processes, in other words, the quality of vagueness or blindness about which we are constantly hearing. Instinctive impulse has no definite aim in consciousness. When not immediately satisfied it is simply a state of unrest (dis-ease) and craving. There enters into it, so far as our own experience teaches, no clear representation of a definite line of action. And certainly it is wholly unaccompanied with any anticipation of an end or a pleasure to be attained by the action. Thus appetite, which in its early stages is purely instinctive, is simply a feeling of pain and unrest, and at most a vague sense of something to be done. As soon, however, as repeated satisfactions enable the child to anticipate the pleasure of eating and distinctly to picture the actions necessary to this pleasure, appetite is no longer simply instinctive, but shares in the distinctive character of volition.

We thus see that the simplest conceivable form of

volition proper involves both an intellectual and an emotional element. Will is, in fact, even in its earliest stages, the product of instinctive active impulse, an intellectual process (recollection and imagination or representation),[1] and feeling (pleasure or pain). Consequently, it is the subject last dealt with in the exposition of mental science What an utter confusion of ideas is involved, therefore, in the pessimists' psychology, which sets out with the primary nature of will! First of all, the abstraction will (apart from its substantiality) is an impossibility, since there can be no volition without aim, that is intellectual representation. Secondly, so far from feeling being a mere appendage of will, the very conception of volition presupposes feeling (pleasure or pain) as something anterior and consequently independent. Of the method of reasoning by which Schopenhauer and Hartmann seek to establish the dependence of pleasure and pain on active impulses, I shall have to speak presently. Here I am concerned merely with their treatment of the idea of will.

Thus far I have taken the simplest view of volition. In all its more developed forms new elements are discoverable. The distinguishing marks of this higher volition are what we call deliberation, choice, and self-restraint. These cannot be wholly resolved into intellectual and emotional factors. Comparison of different ends, and selection, do, no doubt, depend in part on intellectual development, on the growth of memory and imagination, yet not exclusively so. We commonly distinguish a man of highly cultivated intellect from a man of fully developed will, and we mean something by this distinction. Indeed, we are

[1] One may add that an element of belief is also included among the intellectual ingredients of volition.

familiar with the observation that intellectual culture may be directly injurious to what we call will, when it is unaccompanied by the development of something else. What, then, is this something else?

First of all, what we mean by force of will includes, no doubt, a readiness to act in general; but this is not a distinctive mark of the higher volition, but comes to it out of the primitive impulses to action, more especially that disposition to spontaneous movement to which I have already referred. What seems to mark off a man of highly developed will (apart from intellectual elements) is a capacity of self-restraint, or, to use a good physiological term, of inhibition. The nascent undisciplined will is nothing but the realisation of each momentary impulse as it arises. The mature will implies the controlling of these impulses; the repression of action, when conflicting motives arise, in order to compare and to select; the maintaining of a definite purpose beyond the moment, and the persistent concentration of mind on this. Now this capacity is something more than intellectual. To see one end as larger than another is an act of intellectual discrimination; to repress the impulse which tends to the less worthy goal because of this perception of a higher end is something more, and is precisely what distinguishes higher will both from lower will and from mere intellect. I am not concerned here with analysing this ingredient in the higher volition. It is enough that we are able to recognise it and roughly to define it.[1]

[1] Dr. Ferrier has recently attempted to assign the physiological counterpart of this distinguishing function of self-control. He considers that there are special centres of inhibition in the cortical substance of the brain which come into play in the higher acts of volition ('The Functions

We are now, perhaps, in a position to estimate the value of the pessimists' assertion that will is the real source of life's misery, since it is essentially a process of longing, and consequently of dissatisfaction. Does this proposition, together with the practical corollary drawn from it, namely, that the only escape from life's ills is to be found in the cessation or negation of all volition, rest on any real psychological foundation?

Man, say Schopenhauer and Hartmann, so long as he wills, is like a dissatisfied, peevish child that clamours for all it sees, that soon tires of all which a good fortune allots it, and is for ever tormenting itself with new cravings. Does the reader recognise the man of will in this description? Is it not rather odd to look for an illustration of the effects of will in a fickle, whimsical child? One can hardly imagine that writers are really serious when they thus set at nought all the teaching of every-day experience and the most obvious distinctions of our common thought. It is plain that what is here meant by will is simply desire—wild, unbounded, wholly unrestrained desire. In fact desire, longing, craving, is the form in which both Schopenhauer and his successor most frequently speak of will. That desire is not volition, in its proper sense, the reader needs hardly be told. What, then, is its exact relation to volition?

Desire may roughly be defined as the mental state which arises when an idea fitted to be the end of an immediate volition fails to call forth this volition, because the circumstances of the moment do not allow of the appropriate action. If there is no appreciable interval between the

of the Brain,' p. 282 *seq.*). It is clear that this function of self-restraint is greatly assisted by the regulating action of attention, which may be viewed as the highest development of volitional activity.

representation of an end and the execution of the voluntary act there is no room for the state called desire. Again, if the volition is of a protracted nature, a series of actions being necessary to the fruition, there need not, properly speaking, be any feeling of desire. The firm anticipation of a certain end (even though remote) is quite unlike what is meant by desire or longing. The first is the necessary accompaniment of all prolonged volition; the second is quite incompatible with volition. Desire is a mixed state of feeling, pleasurable in so far as it involves the imagination of some enjoyment, painful since this enjoyment is viewed not as certainly to be realised by a present volition, but as something opposed to present reality, as something absent and wanting; or the painful ingredient may be said to arise from a continual frustration of a volitional impulse, through the absence of the proper opening for the action.[1]

Desire has thus as its conditions, first, an intellectual process, the representation of some agreeable or valuable thing; secondly, a properly active process, an impulse to realise the object; and lastly, the abortive termination of this impulse. If any one of these three conditions fails, desire ceases. Thus, if the intellectual representation of the object is withdrawn, no more desire is possible.

[1] While thus sharply separating desire from pleasurable anticipation, I am ready to admit that they shade off into one another by very fine gradations. Thus, during a prolonged series of volitions, the pleasurable anticipation often alternates with fleeting pulsations of desire proper. We are too eager to possess the reality, and so the anticipation becomes feeble, and with it volition fails for an instant. Again, in states of desire the moments of anticipation and longing often alternate, so that it is difficult to say whether the whole state is painful or pleasurable, or exactly balanced between the two. Finally, the imaginative anticipation of a possible or fanciful delight may be nothing but a passing palpitation of feeling, which is nearly a pure ideal pleasure rising neither to a state of definite assurance, as in volition, nor to that of longing.

The above is intended as a rough definition of desire as known to ourselves in consciousness. How far it includes instinctive 'desires' and appetite does not particularly concern us here. Properly speaking, there can be no such thing as desire apart from a representation, more or less distinct, of something wanting and so desired. In many of the animal instincts, *e.g.* that of migration, such a definite representation of an object is possibly present. So in appetite there is, perhaps, from the first a dim perception of something to be possessed. The state of desire may thus be of very unequal degrees of distinctness. It may be further objected to our definition that it excludes desires for objects apart from their pleasurable character. The question whether desire is possible when there is no conception of the object as pleasure-bringing cannot be entered into here. I have assumed provisionally that all desire involves this conception in some faint measure at least. Of course, this pleasure-bringing aspect must include fitness to relieve pain, and so the pain of 'uneasiness,' which may arise from some blind instinctive impulse. Thus this last may often be the first stage of desire proper.

From this it is plain that desire is not only distinct from volition, but also made subject to volition just like any instinctive impulse. First of all, when the futility of desire is distinctly recognised there is a motive for the inhibition of the active impulse which enters into desire. Paradoxical as it may seem, a man of strong will may bring himself to look calmly on a 'desirable' thing without desiring it. The process is precisely the same as when he 'inhibits' an impulse to some present action. But this is not all. There is a far more effective way of ridding oneself of the incubus of futile longing, namely, by a control of the intellectual

process of representation. Will, by acting on the thoughts, has the prerogative of determining within certain limits what the contents of our imagination shall be; and the obvious and perfectly effective remedy for the plague of ungratified desire is the volitional act by which we divert attention to new objects. So far, then, from desire being one with will, it is one chief business of all mature will to regulate, restrain, and, if needful, to stamp out desire.

The pessimists' theory of desire is thus condemned as utterly confounding distinct phenomena, and as overlooking the most obvious interpretation of familiar facts. It includes three cardinal blunders: First of all, it asserts that desire is the fundamental fact in our active nature, whereas it is a highly restricted mode of active impulse dependent on complex conditions, and is secondary not only to blind active impulse, but also to the simplest stage of volition proper. This follows from the fact that volition requires the minimum pause between stimulation and movement, whereas desire requires a longer pause. By help of this fallacy these writers have succeeded in obtaining an apparent basis for their pessimism in the fundamental constitution of will.

Secondly, this theory wholly misconceives the nature of the cessation of desire. It supposes that this is invariably due to intellect. But this is again to confound desire with volition. Our volitions obviously subside when we recognise the impossibility of the action, since this means the withdrawal of the intellectual condition of volition. It may be that this recognition is followed by a complete quiescence of the volitional impulse. In this case, however, there is no such thing as desire. Desire begins only with the recognition of a pause, of an obstacle, and is the state of mind

which arises when the representation of the end persists, in spite of the discovery of its present unattainableness. On the other hand, the theory of Schopenhauer and his follower completely overlooks the obvious fact that desire is controlled and checked by a distinctly volitional process. By help of this second fallacy they succeed in 'proving' that there is no remedy for the misery of life in the will itself.

Lastly, the pessimists' theory of desire, by confounding desire with volition, mixes the distinctly pleasurable state of anticipation during the execution of a volition or series of volitions with the conflicting and painful state of desire proper. How this fallacy helps them in proving their pessimism need hardly be pointed out. The whole region of voluntary activity, that is by far the largest part of life, is thus condemned as necessarily painful.[1]

To sum up the results of this critical examination: Pessimism has no basis in a correct psychology of the will or volition. A correct reading of the facts of the only will known to ourselves tells us that misery may flow from ignorance or erroneous supposition, from the impetuosity of undisciplined single impulse, but never from volition as such. In its very nature, all will tends to lessen pain, and to increase pleasure. If it fails to do this it is not because it is will, but because the will is either too rudimentary and undisciplined, or because it lacks an adequate guidance from the illuminating intellect.

[1] It is, I am aware, not unusual in mental philosophy to extend the term desire to active impulse of all kinds. Yet I have, I think, good authority in retaining the narrower and classic denotation (*cf.* desidero, desiderium). However this be, it is all-important to distinguish the *thing* here referred to from painless unimpeded volitional impulse. The argument of the pessimists manifestly owes its plausibility to the fallacious assumption that desire in the narrow sense (*Begehren*) is the type of all propelling force in conscious action.

Let us now examine the pessimists' doctrine of pleasure and pain in the light of their conception of volition. Both Schopenhauer and Hartmann agree in viewing our emotional life as a mere accessory of volition. Pleasure and pain are to their minds nothing but the satisfaction and non-satisfaction of will or desire. This theory, so far from being new, is as old as philosophy itself. It appears, as we have seen, in Plato, and is more distinctly affirmed by the Epicureans. It reappears in numerous German and French writers, including Leibnitz, and Montaigne, and is commonly adopted by the Italian writers on philosophy of the eighteenth century.[1] Again, if pleasure be nothing but satisfaction of will, it follows, and has been commonly held to follow, that all pleasure is preceded by desire, that is by pain. In truth, this is the form in which the doctrine has commonly been presented by its supporters. Hartmann, as we have seen, seeks to modify this doctrine; of this I shall speak presently. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, recognises the connection between the idea of pleasure as satisfaction of will and that of the negativity of pleasure, and asserts the logical consequences of his doctrine without any attempt at qualification. Pleasure, being nothing but the satisfaction of desire, can never be anything than negative, that is, it is nothing more than the absence of pain. How far, it may be asked, does this theory of pleasure and pain correspond with the facts?

If the psychology of the pessimists is at fault when they treat of will, it is far more faulty when they deal with pleasure and pain. The assertion that pleasure is always preceded by pain has been again and again denied as fla-

[1] For a historical sketch of this doctrine see M. Léon Dumont's interesting volume, 'Théorie Scientifique de la Sensibilité,' première partie, chap. ii., I. 'Théorie Epicurienne.'

grantly contradictory to every-day subjective facts. All the pleasures of stimulation, for example, are perfectly independent of pain as an antecedent. Where is the want, the longing, preceding the innumerable agreeable sensations which are excited in us during a walk on a bright spring morning? Every unexpected joy of life is a pure delight, the value of which is undiminished by a foregoing state of painful desire. What proportion of all our pleasures these unbidden delights may form, I do not pretend to say, though I would protest against Hartmann's cool assumption that they are but a small minority.

Just as pleasures arise in the absence of preceding want, so there are pains which are not born of desire. All desire, in its proper and narrow sense, is, as we have seen, painful, but the converse is obviously untrue; all pain is not desire. It always gives rise to desire, no doubt, but it exists in many cases before it and independently of it. Is the pain of a present attack of tooth-ache, or of a sudden humiliation, the same thing as the desire for relief? Is it not a flagrant perversion of the facts to say that these pains are in any sense the product or the accompaniment of desire?

We find, then, both pleasures and pains which are perfectly independent of will and desire. Not only so, we may discover will itself without the element of pain which is said to be essential to it. A friend calls in after dinner, tells me he is off for the opera and has a spare ticket for me. I am delighted, proceed to put on the necessary out-door clothing, to look up my opera-glass, and to accompany my friend, that is, to execute a long series of separate volitions. Yet, all the while, I am not only free from pain, but am rather elated with a very agreeable anticipation, and cannot, by the greatest effort of introspective attention, find any element of disquietude and longing in this exercise of will.

If, then, experience tells us that pleasure and pain may exist independently of volition, and, on the other hand, that volition may exist unaccompanied by pain, the assertion that all will is pain, and all pleasure and pain mere incidents of volition, is sufficiently disproved.

Let us now glance for a moment at Hartmann's conception of the relation of pleasure and pain to will. As we have seen, he agrees with Schopenhauer that these feelings are nothing but the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of volition; but, since he cannot overlook the facts which contradict this bold assertion, he calls in his *deus ex machinâ*, the Unconscious, to help him out of the difficulty. Where we cannot find in consciousness any state of volition underlying our pleasures and pains, this substratum exists as unconscious will. This employment of a hypothesis which, as we have seen, is self-contradictory, in the most open defiance of the facts of conscious life, needs no comment. It is surely the *reductio ad absurdum* of metaphysical theory.

But Hartmann, while connecting pleasure and pain with will, tries to save the positive character of pleasure. This mode of feeling is not a negation, though it is very nearly the same thing as a negation. Hartmann does not show why pleasure is to be regarded as positive, nor does he seek to reconcile its positivity with his doctrine that all pleasure is satisfaction of will. The truth is, it is impossible to effect such a reconciliation. The very idea of satisfaction presupposes that of preceding dissatisfaction. The pleasures of satisfaction arise, as I have shown, through a foregoing state of desire and longing, which Hartmann, like Schopenhauer, recognises to be painful. It must follow, then, on Hartmann's principles, that with respect to the positive

pleasures recognised by him, as they answer to an unconscious volition, so they follow on an unconscious longing.

It might, indeed, be urged in favour of Hartmann that he is using the term satisfaction in a loose sense, and that by positive pleasure he means the gratification attending volition when there is no preceding state of desire. Even then, however, Hartmann's theory does not stand; for this gratification rests, as we have seen, on the distinct anticipation and partial ideal possession of a pleasure which is independent of the volition.

If the pessimists' conception of the relation of will to pleasure and pain is erroneous, what, it will be asked, is the right conception? For an answer the reader need only take up any respectable text-book in psychology. Pleasure and pain are found to arise from certain modes of bodily and mental activity, which are variously defined as those which promote or hinder normal function, which add to or diminish the energies of the organism. Being thus experienced before and independently of volition, they enter in ideal form, that is as recollections and anticipations, into the process of volition. We will to enjoy ourselves in a particular way, because the idea of the enjoyment already exists as the result of previous experiences.[1] It is a gross perversion of facts to say that the prospect is enjoyable because we already will it. The case is similar when our volition proceeds in the direction of the avoidance of a pain.

[1] These previous experiences may of course be conceived as ancestral, in which case the idea of the enjoyment would precede the experience of the reality in the individual life. I do not, however, think it probable that ideas of pleasure and pain are transmitted to descendants with any degree of distinctness. It would follow from this that instinctive active impulses (including inherited desires) do not involve clear representations of the ends to be realised.

The idea of the pain already exists before the volition, and is, in truth, its real determining force.

Not only does volition pre-suppose pleasure and pain as independent existences; desire itself, in its proper sense, does so too. To desire something which is withheld from us, say, an evening's entertainment from which we are shut out through bodily indisposition, means that we conceive by help of past experience the possession of the object to be a pleasure. When all such independent experience is wanting there can be no definite desire, only a state of unrest, or at most a vague sense of something wanting.[1]

Still, I have admitted that desire is in itself a painful condition from which the fruition of the thing desired clearly delivers us. Moreover, a good deal of pleasure is commonly spoken of as a satisfaction of desire, and this mode of speech cannot but rest on some basis of fact. Not only so, there are many pleasures which evidently repose on a negative basis, that is to say, they arise solely through the removal of some previous state of pain. What, it may be asked, is the true nature of all such negative pleasure?

First of all, let us take the hypothetical case of pain unaccompanied by desire for relief, for example, an infant's bodily distress. The cessation of this, one might imagine, would be in itself nothing but quiescence, that is to say, a neutral condition of mind neither pleasurable nor painful.

[1] I do not here enter into the question how, on this view, the earliest volitions arise. To say that the first volition presupposes both a knowledge of pleasure (independently of will) and, further, a knowledge that this pleasure will follow the present volition, involves no real contradiction, if we suppose the connection between the pleasure and the volition to have been first disclosed through spontaneous and accidental action. Mr. Bain's derivation of will illustrates in an admirable way how these two apparently antagonistic facts may be reconciled.

Yet a distinction must be drawn. Quiescence means uniformity of feeling, in other words, a dead level of consciousness. Here, however, there has been a sudden transition from pain to painlessness. By the very force of this transition the new state would acquire a peculiar intensity. Its quality in contrast to that of the foregoing pain would impress itself, so to speak, on the child's mind. Would it be correct to call this effect an approximation to a state of positive pleasure? Perhaps not: one may safely say, however, that its value is somewhat higher than that of a protracted condition of painlessness.

Let us now suppose the addition of a little intelligence, involving the rudimentary processes of memory and comparison. In this case the cessation of the pain will be followed by an idea of it as something past. This being contrasted with the present state of mind, there arises the peculiar state of feeling called a sense of relief, which includes the distinct recognition of an escape from something disagreeable. This state of feeling is by no means neutral; it is distinctly pleasurable, the pleasure being due to this very recognition of escape from something, of elevation above something, or, in other words, of gaining something.[1]

Let us now take the case of desire. It does not matter whether it be a desire for some withheld enjoyment, or one for relief from some present pain. In either case the desire

[1] That this involves no contradiction will be seen by the reflection that a sick person may derive a positive gratification from the recognition of a mere diminution of pain. This gratification, moreover, is not to be referred wholly to the anticipation of health and its accompanying enjoyments; for it may be seen when there is no such prospect. The whole state may be painful, but the conviction of partial relief is itself an element of positive pleasure.

is painful, there being, as we have seen, an active, and even a volitional impulse involved in the state, and a conflict between this and the recognition of the unattainability of the object desired. Let us now suppose the desire to be realised and the present pain removed, or the desired pleasure actually present: what effect has the past state of desire on the present feeling? Clearly, it supplies another element in the positive pleasure which ensues. In the first place, the impeded active impulse is liberated, and performs its function, and this activity itself, especially after the necessary energy has been pent up awhile, is distinctly pleasurable. But this is not all. The persistence of the desire in recollection, along with the present feeling, gives rise to the sense of desire appeased, conflict resolved, of the attainment of harmony; and the recognition of this, the perception of one's present condition as one of harmony after discord, yields an ingredient of lively pleasure. It is this current of positive gratification which helps to make the relief from pain so delicious, while it adds intensity to the pleasure which the attainment of every desired enjoyment would otherwise bring us.

In view of these facts, what are we to think of Hartmann's assertion that in the satisfaction of hunger 'the individual never experiences a positive elevation above the zero point (*Nullpunkt*) of feeling'? It is only just to Hartmann to say that he is here distinctly excluding the elements of positive gratification which flow from the sensations accompanying eating. Still, is it not a flagrant oversight not to perceive that the satisfaction of hunger in a being capable only of the rudimentary processes of recollection and comparison brings a distinct positive gratification in the shape of a sense of want filled up and an eagerly desired object attained?

In one place Hartmann shifts his ground, maintaining that the pleasure arising from the withdrawal of pain, as toothache, is far inferior to the pain itself. Who, it may be asked, ever doubted this? But it is one thing to deny all positive worth to such relief, another thing merely to rank it below the actuality by which the value of the relief is measured.

The obvious retort to Hartmann's self-evident assertion is that the negative pain also which arises from the cessation of a pleasure is inferior to that pleasure. The dying away of a beautiful song leaves a faint, momentary longing, no doubt, but what is this compared with the real enjoyment itself? Hartmann does not, of course, speak of this. At the same time, he seeks, to some extent, to put the value of negative pains above that of negative pleasures. Whenever the pleasure and pain which cease and give rise to the opposite feelings are customary ones, the succeeding negative pain is, according to him, much greater than the succeeding negative pleasure. In other words, we miss pleasures intensely, whereas the removal of customary pains affects us but slightly.

Hartmann here touches on the well-known principle of accommodation or habituation, through which all oft-repeated states of feeling become, in a certain measure, dulled; only, with characteristic one-sidedness, he applies this to pleasure only, and not to pain. Surely, a frequently recurring or customary pain, whether bodily or mental, tends to lessen with time as greatly and as rapidly as an habitual pleasure. We 'get used' to all kinds of annoyances; that is, we become comparatively indifferent to them, just as our customary enjoyments are apt to grow insipid. And further, the absence of a dull customary

pain is quite as operative on our feeling as the absence of a customary pleasure. A sick person who has grown approximately indifferent to his condition experiences a deep sense of relief and the elating joy of health when convalescence arrives, just as a man who has grown used to certain material comforts feels vexed and miserable when these are removed.[1]

Nor is it true that the negative pleasure, in the case of the cessation of these customary states, is less enduring than the negative pain. The negative feeling lasts in each case precisely as long as the recollection of the previous state. Even allowing that the idea of a lost source of enjoyment forces itself on the imagination with greater persistence than that of a past source of pain (which is by no means self-evident), still, inasmuch as the will in its control of the ideas naturally discourages the state of desire in the first instance, while it fosters the feeling of relief in the second, the balance would surely seem to lean the other way.[2]

[1] This fact is well brought out by Fechner, in his new and interesting work, 'Vorschule der Aesthetik,' vol. ii. pp. 243, 244.

[2] It is but another form of this fallacy respecting negative pleasure to say that all pleasure of satisfaction is necessarily momentary, whereas that of dissatisfaction or desire is enduring. This is by no means self-evident if we reckon the influence of the higher volition on thought and feeling. But even were it so, would not the fact be counterbalanced by the consideration that the pain following enjoyment is often momentary as compared with that enjoyment? Another of Hartmann's arguments is that dissatisfaction of will always forces itself into consciousness, while the satisfaction of will does not. This, of course, rests wholly on the hypothesis of unconscious will. Apart from this, the fact that non-existing potential desire when actually satisfied yields no pleasure is exactly balanced by the other fact that potential desire when not actually satisfied gives no pain. In other words, the fact, for example, that when surrounded by friends I am not conscious of a gratification of a desire for companionship is paralleled by the fact that where there is no desire for companionship solitude is no pain.

Let us now pass for an instant to another of Hartmann's ideas, touching the relation of negative pleasures to pains. As we have seen, he thinks that the nervous exhaustion accompanying both pleasure and pain, while adding to the positive pain, lessens and curtails the positive pleasure, and further, while intensifying the negative pleasure of relief, dulls the negative pain which arises through the cessation of pleasure. The first thing to remark on this doctrine is that it directly tells against the foregoing arguments in favour of negative pains being so much greater than negative pleasures. This obvious fact seems to be quite overlooked by the author, who roughly lumps together these arguments as telling in different ways for the predominance of pain above pleasure.[1] The theory of nervous exhaustion serves, as is obvious, to give a special value to positive pains as against positive pleasures, since it involves an intensification of all prolonged pains, and a weakening of all prolonged pleasures. Hartmann evidently thinks that this doctrine of nervous exhaustion is a discovery. He dwells on it at great length. It is put forward as a scientific and even as a physiological truth which is favourable to pessimism. It deserves, therefore, a moment's investigation.

Hartmann's doctrine, like a good many other of his ideas, contains an element of truth, but a one-sided and distorted truth. It is true that both pleasurable and painful excitation of nerve may produce fatigue, but it by no means follows that they will do so. Let us first take the

[1] The reader will see that the present argument is used by Hartmann to bring out the extent of negative pleasure as opposed to positive pleasure; whereas the foregoing arguments are employed to elevate negative pains above negative pleasures, the pains of desire above the pleasures of relief.

case of pleasure. Gentle or moderate pleasures—for example, the murmuring sound of the sea, the moderate fragrance of a garden—may be greatly prolonged without producing sensible fatigue. It is only when the stimulation is intense that there follows the result described by Hartmann. After a long and brilliant musical movement, for example, the ear is oppressed and desires rest. We have a feeling of satiety which renders any further stimulation of the same kind for the time disagreeable. But, again, pleasure may abate without the rise of conscious fatigue. Thus, if we linger for an hour among the odours of a garden, the centres of olfactory sensation are no longer appreciably affected by the stimulation, and we cease to have any conscious impression. This is due, of course, to the action of accommodation referred to just now. We see, then, that the sequence of fatigue on prolonged pleasurable stimulation is true only within very narrow limits.

In the case of painful stimulation it is commonly held that all pain (when not arising from deficiency of stimulation, or from want) is the concomitant of an excitation, which, either through its excessive intensity, or through its unfavourable form, injures and fatigues the nerve. Thus Helmholtz explains the pain of musical discord (after the analogy of flickering light) as resulting from a violent and consequently wearing excitation of the nervous substance. Hence it is simply tautology to say that prolonged pain gives rise to fatigue. All pain does so, and prolonged pain merely in a greater measure. But fatigue accompanies partial exhaustion of the nerve only, not total exhaustion.[1] When the injurious excitation reaches a certain pitch and

[1] Hartmann just alludes to the fact of total exhaustion, but does not go into the subject so as to show how it limits the action of fatigue.

duration, it tends to disable the nerve altogether, and in this case there is no further function at all, pleasurable or painful. Thus injuriously strong light may 'blind' the eye, and so produce, for the time, at least, total insensibility. In some cases of painful stimulation, as that of tooth-ache, mentioned by Hartmann, this effect of blunting the nerve does not seem to be brought about as soon as one might expect, and thus, as Fechner admits, intense pains seem to be less quickly liable to the effect of blunting than intense pleasures.[1] Still, even allowing this to be so, the fact remains that the dulling influence of protracted excitation holds good for both pleasure and pain within certain limits. Once more, if the painful excitation is very moderate in intensity it may, like moderate pleasurable excitation, gradually die away into a faint mode of consciousness, which is neither pleasurable nor painful. The beat of factory machinery, for example, which irritates the ear considerably at first, soon becomes a dull perception, which has no appreciable effect on our feeling.

It must, in the last place, be admitted, as Fechner points out ('Vorschule der Aesthetik,' ii. 243), that intense protracted pains do not so easily transform themselves into their opposite as intense protracted pleasures. And here, again, we find a fact that favours Hartmann's views. Intense pains become with protraction less painful, and in time pass into a neutral state of feeling, but they hardly become pleasurable. Yet here, again, there is a counterbalancing fact. Many impressions, which in the first stage are

[1] It is possible that these persistent pains, as tooth-ache, ear-ache, &c., involve the injurious action of a plurality of nervous fibres, so that there is a certain amount of alternation in the stimulation of each element. Protracted tooth-ache certainly seems to spread over a large area of nerve.

confused and disagreeable, become clear and agreeable when prolonged. All impressions involving novel elements and demanding an effort of intellectual comprehension are disagreeable if momentary, agreeable and increasingly so (within certain limits) when prolonged.

But again, though prolonged single painful impressions do not become pleasurable, painful impressions, when repeated at intervals, not only lose their painfulness, but, within certain limits, actually become pleasurable, for example, the sensations of tobacco, alcoholic drinks, &c. Here we have another principle—that of accommodation or habituation—which tells distinctly in favour of pleasure. Repeated pleasures, if an interval elapses, do not become painful as repeated pains become pleasurable. Of the other effects of habit in making us sensitive to the loss of the customary, enough has already been said.

So far, then, from Hartmann's idea of nervous exhaustion being a discovery which has an important bearing on pessimism, it is involved in the very conception of painful stimulation, and it represents only a very limited truth in respect to pleasure. In brief, nervous fatigue is only a stage in the process of nervous exhaustion; and the fact of nervous exhaustion, taken as a whole, has, at the most, a barely appreciable effect in raising pain above pleasure. And further, even if this effect be allowed, it is fully counterbalanced by other considerations, as that of habituation or accommodation, which tell in favour of pleasure.

One or two other assertions of Schopenhauer and Hartmann relating to pleasure and pain may be just alluded to. Hartmann contends that a given quantity of pain is not exactly compensated for by an equal quantity of pleasure—in other words, we dislike pain more than we

like pleasure. His example is that nobody would choose to hear discords for five minutes in order to hear beautiful harmonies for the next five minutes. Perhaps not, though the fact that the pleasure was to succeed the pain, and so to possess the added force of contrast,[1] as well as to be the final and enduring impression, would certainly have to be taken into the calculation. But where, one naturally asks, did Hartmann learn that the pleasure in this case is equal to the pain? To a refined musical ear a barbarous discord is a far greater pain than the pleasure of a perfect harmony, if for no other reason, at least for this, that the latter is much more frequently heard than the former. A man who had frequently to listen to jarring discords would very likely receive no more pain from them than pleasure from familiar harmonies, and in this case he might not improbably be perfectly indifferent when Hartmann made his proposal to him.

The assertion that a given intensity of pain is not compensated by an equal quantity of pleasure, will not bear close inspection. There are two ways of effecting such a balance of these opposite feelings. The first and simplest method is to make the antagonistic feelings simultaneous. In this case it will be found that when they are of equal intensity, they tend to neutralise one another, that is, to produce a resultant state of feeling which has a zero-value. This, I conceive, is a fact which anyone can verify for himself. It may be said, indeed, that most people measure ratios of intensity among pleasures and pains solely by help

[1] Fechner has made important use of the effect of contrast among two or more successive impressions as intensifying the later, and not the earlier, in its bearing on æsthetic laws ('Vorschule der Aesthetik,' vol. ii. chap. xxxvii., 'Princip des aesthetischen Contrastes,' &c.).

of this mutually counteracting force. It is certainly very difficult to appreciate the relative intensity of a pleasure and a pain apart from such a test; yet by an effort of abstraction it is, I think, possible, in a certain rough fashion, and so far as this is the case, it will be found that masses of pleasurable and painful feeling which are felt apart to be approximately equal in intensity, neutralise one another.

The second mode of comparing the relative worth of pleasures and pains is by presenting them as conjoint and inseparable consequences of one and the same act. In this case, too, it will be found that on the whole opposite feelings of equal intensity just counterbalance one another, and so produce a state of equilibrium, that is, inaction. Yet this case is more complicated and calls for closer examination.

In the first place, the pleasure and pain which are to result from a represented action will not, it may be assumed, be simultaneously experienced. Either the pleasure will follow the pain or *vice versâ*. Now this circumstance will make a difference according to the temperament and disposition of the particular person concerned. If there is a great interval between the two experiences, the nearer may exert an undue influence on the imagination of an eager, impulsive person, so as partially to veil from view the more remote. On the other hand, in the case of a man of cooler temperament, the reflection, already spoken of, that the second experience will continue after the first is over, and that it will have an added value (positive or negative), as a transition from the first, will tend to give this later feeling a higher worth than it would receive on the ground of its intensity alone.

Nevertheless, in spite of these variable influences, one

may safely assert that in proportion as the opposite feelings present themselves to the imagination as equi-distant in time, their stimulating effect (either as attracting or as repelling forces) on will and action will be in the direct ratio of their intensities as mental excitations or feelings, and that, if equal in intensity, the active result will be *nil.* Here, again, I can only bid the reader make the necessary observations for himself.

In this reasoning one thing has been assumed, namely, that in this anticipation feelings of pleasure and pain shall be represented in the exact proportion of their actual intensity as present feelings. Is this condition always fulfilled? Certainly not. We all know that we are apt sometimes to exaggerate the pleasurable at the expense of the painful, at other times to do the exact contrary. We may thus be said to shrink sometimes from pain more than to be drawn to pleasure, and *vice versâ.* Yet this is only a rough way of expressing the facts, since, strictly speaking, it is the apparent relative magnitudes of the pleasure and pain which undergo a change, not their relative attractive and repellent force. These variations are clearly connected with fluctuations of mental mood and differences of temperament—a subject to be dealt with later on.

Owing to these uncertainties in the direction of imagination, it is not easy to measure pleasures and pains very exactly together in relation to action, for we cannot be sure that the two quantities are present to the mind in the ratio of their actual intensities. Yet by varying the observation amid all changes of mood, one may roughly determine the point at which these deflecting influences of the imagination are at their minimum. And here, it will be found, as I have said, that, equidistance from the present moment being

presupposed, pleasures and pains of equal intensity tend just to counteract one another and so to produce a volitional equilibrium.

One may, indeed, put a meaning into the assertion that pleasures and pains of like intensity do not always balance one another. It is a fact, as I hope to show by-and-by, that our relative sensibility to pleasurable and painful stimuli varies considerably, so that pleasant objects which at one time more than compensate us for the pain of attaining them at other times fail to do so, and so on. We may say, then, that given certain internal conditions (namely, a depressed mental tone), the causes or sources of pleasure fail to counteract those of pain in the ratio of their normal or medium values. Yet this advantage on the side of pain is, as I shall show, no constant one. Further, it is manifestly incorrect to say that even in this case a quantity of pain more than balances an equal quantity of pleasure. The pleasure and pain which are felt to be equivalent are still equal in intensity; it is simply the relative value of the external stimuli which has undergone a change.

It appears, then, that the pessimist in vain seeks a ground for his creed in the supposition that pain has some natural advantage over pleasure, owing to which a given intensity of pleasure and of pain leaves the subject worse off than before. We must accept the fact that pain is just as bad as pleasure is good, and no worse than this.[1]

[1] I do not here raise the question whether the average or the maximum intensity of pain exceeds that of pleasure. Some of the last century optimists (*e.g.* Hartley and Adam Smith), appear to have conceded both of these points. The question does not readily admit of solution. It is obvious that in relation to the worth of life, this point would have to be discussed in connection with a second, namely the comparative frequency of pleasures and pains.

The last point to be alluded to, in connection with the pessimists' theory of pleasure and pain, is the place which ennui fills in their system. Schopenhauer seems to regard ennui as equally fundamental with the state of desire. As soon as the moment's desire is satisfied, and no new scope for volition presents itself, we lapse into ennui. The life which we have willed to possess thus becomes, in the moment of attainment, a burden. Ennui is thus the other bleak and dreary pole of existence, which confronts that of tormenting desire.

Now this view of ennui as something fundamental, seems to me plainly opposed to the facts. The lower animals do not seem to experience ennui. The cessation of desire in their case is followed by a state of quiescence which, by a certain fiction of imagination, perhaps, we are apt to call contentment.[1] Ennui begins as soon as imagination, and the power of conceiving pleasurable activities, is sufficiently developed. Thus a dog which, after having been shut indoors some time, sighs as he lies stretched out before the unappreciated kitchen fire, may reasonably be supposed to feel ennui just because it feels a vague longing for outdoor activity. In our own case ennui is clearly connected with a craving for activities which are only faintly defined in the imagination. The child is afflicted with ennui when it indistinctly imagines some grateful occupation without perceiving it as a present possibility. The man of idle life becomes a prey to ennui when he vaguely pictures to himself a more active existence without being roused to shape this longing into a definite purpose.

[1] I do not mean by this that the average emotional condition of the lower animals in their hours of quiescence is of a perfectly neutral complexion: on the contrary, I hold that in the case of a healthy organism there is a considerable average balance of pleasurable sensation.

Ennui thus has for its necessary condition nascent desire and indistinct representation of pleasure. In truth, it may be said to be the penalty inflicted on us for the non-fulfilment of some normal function, or the reminder which is given us by the natural impulse of an organ to discharge its recruited store of energy. Hence, so far from regarding it as primary, and the activity which it is fitted to prompt as secondary, it would be much more correct to view this activity as the primary condition, and ennui as secondary and dependent on this. In short, the activity follows its proper impulse (whether a blind instinct or a conscious desire), and ennui is simply an occasional incident in the process.

CHAPTER X.

THE EMPIRICAL BASIS OF PESSIMISM.

In the two preceding chapters I have attempted to show that the scientific basis of pessimism as presented in the writings of Schopenhauer and Hartmann is not a very stable one. Let us now look briefly at the empirical or *à posteriori* proof which they offer as supplementary to the scientific. In criticising this I shall deal principally with Hartmann, who has elaborated this side of pessimism much more carefully than his predecessor. In fact, as we have seen, Schopenhauer rather despised the argument from observation, though he admitted its possibility and validity, being quite satisfied with his *à priori* demonstration.

First of all, then, let us look at the way in which Hartmann sets about proving that human life, as it now exists, is a preponderance of misery. We are here at once struck by the fact that the author rejects individual testimony as an untrusworthy source of information on the subject. Men are disposed to magnify the value of life through the very action of unconscious will. This mode of settling the question has at least the merit of boldness. While professing to accept the facts of life as determining its value, the writer cuts off the surest avenue to the facts. And on what grounds? By assuming that very preponderance of evil which he is undertaking to prove. If we already know

that life is the product of blind will, and so in its nature misery, and that consequently the belief in happiness is an illusion, one does not see why any examination of the facts of life is required. If, on the contrary, the investigation of facts is to be of any use, we must obviously put aside all prepossessions, metaphysical or other, and simply ask what experience says; and if we do so, I do not see how it is possible to throw overboard individual testimony, which is obviously the only knowledge we have of a large part of human experience. In point of fact, if, by any statistical researches, we could get a sufficient number of individual testimonies as to the worth of life, separating the momentary convictions from the permanent, we should have by far the best empirical data which the problem allows of. It is surely a little arrogant to assume that any single observer's impression respecting the mental condition of others is superior in value to the collective testimony of mankind, so far as it can be obtained, as to their own mental condition.[1] Whether, so far as we can ascertain, men are universally biassed to think too well of life, and never to think ill of it, is a proposition we shall have to deal with later on.

Hartmann, then, resorts to the method of objective observation. He holds that by contemplating the circumstances of men and their various activities, we may reach a sufficiently exact conclusion on the matter. How, then, are

[1] Schopenhauer, though not wanting in boldness, does not reach this height. He frequently appeals to individual testimony, and his empirical proof of pessimism seems to resolve itself into the uniform testimony of men reflecting on their past life. As we have seen, too, much older complainers of life were quite ready to appeal to human testimony. Hartmann is too shrewd not to know that testimony is not uniformly in favour of pessimism, and thus he is forced to abandon this particular argument.

we to pursue this line of investigation? Simply in this way. Heap together a number of the leading impulses and dominant circumstances of human life, such as love, anger, ambition, wealth, marriage, friendship, and so on. This miscellaneous pile may stand for life as a whole. In the next place, bring out into strong light all the evils and drawbacks incident to these conditions of life. Touch with the lightest hand possible the accompanying advantages (or, if they are not too palpable, pass them by altogether); sum up the results, and you have a balance in favour of pain. The reader will be inclined to ask whether this is not a gross caricature of Hartmann's procedure. I am persuaded that it is not, and that every careful reader of the argument will find my description to be an accurate one.

In the first place, there is no attempt to take a complete systematic view of human life. The divisions adopted by Hartmann are as arbitrary as they well could be. Here is the list: 1. Health, youth, liberty, and material sufficiency; 2. Hunger and love (a significant juxtaposition in the pessimist's view of life); 3. Pity, friendship, and family happiness; 4. Pride, ambition, and desire for dominion; 5. Religious edification; 6. Immorality; 7. Enjoyments of science and art; 8. Sleeping and Dreaming; 9. Pursuit of wealth (above the satisfaction of wants); 10. Envy, vexation, &c.; 11. Hope. What a classification! the reader may well exclaim. It is plain that there is here not the slightest pretence at giving a psychological basis to the scheme of activities, or at resting the division of circumstances and external conditions on some definite scientific conception of life. The result of such a haphazard arrangement is, of course, that there is no systematic review of life at all.

First of all, there are gross omissions in this scheme. For example, there is no place given to motor activity, as in bodily exercise, manual employments of all kinds. Work is dealt with, it is true, but only as a necessary and painful condition of sustaining bodily life. All kinds of spontaneous bodily activity, from the mechanical experiments of the boy to the adventurous travels of the man, are left out of sight. Again, what must be said of a systematic and exhaustive examination of life which finds no place for any of the modes of sensuous stimulation (apart from art), for the influences of the external world on our fancy and emotion, or for the value of that impulse of laughter which serves to transform all the lighter evils of existence into sources of an after-gaiety, and which may throw a sparkle of light even into some of the gloomiest experiences of life? One need hardly wonder, however, that a pessimist should be a little shy of talking about this fountain of merriment: genuine humour does not find a congenial soil in the pessimist's view of things. But, once more, is it a systematic analysis which includes the effects of immorality, but has no place for the daily fulfilments of obligation of all worthy citizens? Are these fulfilments no source of happiness both to the agent and to others, and is their number so trivial as to justify their omission from the scheme?[1] But the reader may safely be left to himself to judge of the deficiencies of this mapping out of life.

Just as it is defective, so it is redundant. Thus the relations of the sexes turn up both under 'Love' and under

[1] Hartmann does, indeed, just allude to one part of morality, namely, benevolence, as a source of benefit to others, but only to dismiss it as being necessarily connected with self-sacrifice (!). He seems to think that the ordinary fulfilment of duty leaves the agent at the zero point of happiness.

'Family happiness,' and thus the worst ingredient of life, according to the pessimists, may be said to be counted twice over. So, again, the evil of hunger is made to count twice, since it is quietly brought in under work and material sufficiency as the spur that goads men on to dreary labour. Is this quite what one would expect from an accurate inductive reasoner?

If, however, the scheme of life-functions is a faulty one, what shall be said of the way in which the balance is struck in the case of each? There is no pretence to define the point at which we are to place the threshold of enjoyment in the observation of others, and what we are to take to be the indications or expression of a positive state of happiness. In fact, Hartmann's method is essentially a rough one. It disdains niceties of distinction, cares nothing for the medium conditions of human feeling, but simply considers the extremes, that is to say, the more intense degrees of pleasure and pain. This is well illustrated in the case of morality and immorality already alluded to. So it is in the instance of work, which is put down in the gross, as painful, without the faintest attempt to determine whether it can ever be agreeable as when undertaken, as it certainly is every day, without any pressure of bodily necessities. The result of this method is that the value of a very large part of life, namely all that lies between the extremes of pleasurable and painful excitement, is left wholly undetermined, or rather determined beforehand without any investigation worthy of the name.

To glance for a moment or two longer at Hartmann's view of work or active employment, it is plain that, like Schopenhauer, he regards it as a *pis aller*, as an escape from the torments of ennui. I admit that a good deal

of active occupation is entered upon under the stimulus of ennui, even though, as we have seen, this stimulus is nothing primordial but depends itself on the proper forces of active impulse and desire. But is it correct to say that men never engage in active pursuits except under the pressure of ennui? Does not action, in many of its forms, woo us on by presenting itself to our imagination as something positively agreeable? And is this not especially so in the case of children and robust men, whose accumulated muscular energy is ready to discharge itself in pleasurable movement? It is characteristic that Hartmann ignores the possibility of activity being entered on for its own sake. Yet by what other supposition are we to account for the gladness and joyousness of boys as they bound to their arduous sports, or of vigorous men as they take part in the chase or exercise their muscles in long pedestrian rambles? And are not the quieter sorts of muscular activity accompanied, too, by their own form of gratification? Does not the play of the eye in its innumerable daily movements yield us its modest quota of pleasure quite apart from the sensuous impressions which it is the means of securing? All these inquiries are quietly ignored by our author, who follows his 'inductive path' with an unsuspecting confidence that becomes at times positively amusing.

Not only does the writer omit to mention the pleasurable exercise of the motor energies of the body, he makes no reference to that quiet gratification which flows in on our minds through the channels of our daily intellectual activity, the satisfaction of the impulses of curiosity, and the ever-varying play of attention as directed to the myriad objects and events of the world about us. It is evident that this intellectual activity fills up a good part of our

daily life, entering alike into our leisure and into our business pursuits. Yet Hartmann makes no allusion to it. He does talk, indeed, of the pleasures of science, of which he thinks only a handful of mankind are really capable, but he makes no reference to that universally diffused curiosity which precedes all scientific interest and which counts as a considerable factor even in the life of many of the uncultivated. Our author might, perhaps, say that the languid interest which the average man takes in observing and understanding what goes on about him is but another forced attempt to escape the pangs of ennui. Nevertheless, it might have been worth while to ask how far people, and especially young people, are actuated by a genuine and self-sufficing impulse of curiosity.

Each of the elements just noticed, the pleasure of muscular exercise, and of intellectual activity, enters into much of our daily work, even our necessary work, and seems to give it an appreciable value. Not only so, work derives worth from higher emotional sources. Of these, the most important is the sentiment happily characterised by Mr. Bain as 'the interest of pursuit.' There seems to be an enjoyment connected with the very exercise of the volitional apparatus when the end to be gained is not immediate. That people draw a considerable amount of gratification from the mere accomplishment of an aim, may be seen in the readiness with which idle holiday loungers will extemporise, as modes of pastime, artificial ends, just for the pleasure of compassing them. This species of pleasure is an accompaniment of work in the case of every man who has the intelligence and the imagination to anticipate distant results.

Other valuable concomitants of work are the renewed

consciousness of energy displayed, of obligation fulfilled and of the sense of augmented personal dignity which grow out of these feelings. In the case of every reflective and conscientious man these ingredients serve to invest work with a yet higher value.

I am far from saying that work is always pleasurable. It is a trite observation that men are indolent and dislike arduous work, at least on a first view. Also, it is only too manifest that in our present stage of industrial progress the work allotted to men is too often excessive as muscular exertion, and deficient as a source of continuous and varied intellectual interest. I am concerned here merely with showing that work, even when entered on at first with reluctance and from necessity, may under favourable circumstances become the fountain and source of a quiet enjoyment, which, if not intense in any moment, amounts when diffused over a wide area of life, to a considerable ingredient of happiness. To condemn work, then, *in toto* as utterly barren of immediate pleasure, is a scarcely pardonable error.

Not only, however, does the author's method of calculation thus pass over whole tracts of experience which lie in the lower and median latitudes of our emotional life; it even fails to recognise some of the intenser forms of our enjoyments. We see this illustrated in a striking manner in the discussion of health. To Hartmann health is simply a negative condition of happiness, never one of its positive ingredients. He seems to think that the normal fulfilment of the organic functions does not affect consciousness and that thus a high degree of vitality is of worth only as a starting-point for enjoyment.

This view completely overlooks one of the most important,

perhaps the most important, ingredient of happiness, namely, what is known as mental tone or the underlying sense of well-being. It is generally agreed among physiologists and psychologists that this fundamental emotional element, which enters into and colours all the day's contacts with the external world, is the product of the condition of the numerous organic processes, such as digestion, circulation, and respiration, together with the state of nourishment and vigour of the various organs, not least among which stands the nervous system itself. According as these bodily conditions are high and flourishing or low and feeble, the mood of the hour may oscillate within very wide limits, from the joyous elation which we experience when the tide of bodily vigour is at its height, to the gloomy depression which overtakes us when it ebbs to the low-water mark. I am not concerned here to determine what is the balance which these rhythmic changes in the vigour of our organism leave in the case of an average healthy man. On this point something will be said by and by. I only refer to it here as an example of Hartmann's 'calculation.' One need not, perhaps, wonder that Hartmann should be a little shy in relation to this subject of mental tone. It has, as I hope to show, a very close bearing on the origin and significance of pessimism and optimism alike. Only, he should not seek to foist on us, as a complete calculus of life's pleasures and pains, a method which in reality omits the most fundamental factor of our emotional existence.

After having thus illustrated Hartmann's mode of calculation in the case of morality, active occupation, and health, it is hardly worth while to examine his way of dealing with the other and narrower regions of life. Yet the utterly worthless character of the 'method' employed

cannot be fully appreciated without a bare allusion to one or two other points. For example, grief over the past is simply mentioned among the feelings which bring nothing but pain, or 'as good as no pleasure' to counterbalance the pain. Everybody sees, of course, that grief is pain; but the real question here is obviously whether lost possessions, past good in general, brings more pain than pleasure. Does some lost source of happiness, when it lives in memory, bring more pain than pleasure? That there is an element of pleasure in looking back on some departed joy, even when it is recognised as departed, hardly requires proof. Even in the sadness which steals over us in a far-reaching retrospection there may be found exquisite pulsations of delight, so that we often voluntarily choose to nourish our softened griefs.

The well-known lines:

> 'Tis better to have loved and lost
> Than never to have loved at all,'

appear clearly enough to express this assurance of a positive satisfaction in the recollection of a departed happiness. Yet of this element of our emotional experience, which serves to make the very evanescence of good a ground for loving it more, Hartmann thinks it quite unnecessary to speak.

One other example of Hartmann's mode of calculation deserves to be mentioned. This is his treatment of vanity and the love of others' approbation. Hartmann distinguishes rightly enough the feeling of self-esteem from the love of external approbation. Of this latter sentiment he says that for a hundred injuries there comes but one gratification. Possibly this is so in the case of those who most

greedily desire praise; but is it true of self-complacency? In this case, surely, one may say that a thousand gratifications are not marred by a single disappointment. In fact nothing is more assured and imperturbable than a good self-conceit. It is a perennial source of delicious feeling. It is independent of all external circumstances. Yes, says Hartmann, but it rests on an illusion. No doubt, in many cases, but is all self-esteem illusory? Hartmann's conception of what constitutes an illusion in sentiment is exceedingly curious. Thus he holds that all esteem of others' good opinion is illusory, since this opinion can have no value apart from its effect on their conduct towards us. As well might one say: 'Beauty rests on an illusion, for what worth can beauty have apart from its bearing on the utilities of life?' In one case as in the other, the obvious answer is that our emotional nature is so put together that the esteem of others and beauty alike are always felt to be a good. To ask for any further reason why approbation should please us is about as rational as to ask for a reason why we are glad in the morning sunlight.[1]

The reader is by this time, perhaps, pretty well convinced of the utterly flimsy and meretricious character of Hartmann's

[1] The fallacy into which Hartmann here falls arises from his inability to see the distinction between dependent and immediate value. When an object has the value of utility (in its narrow sense), or any similar mode of objective value over and above the feeling it excites in the beholder, we can, of course, speak of any particular estimate as real and correct or as unreal and illusory. Thus, a person's opinion of himself may obviously be illusory, because his proper worth is something objective, that is, rests on certain external relations existing between himself and his fellow-men. On the other hand, value which has no other basis but immediate feeling can never be illusory. At the very least, it is real for the person who is the subject of the feeling, and, if the habit of feeling be general, it is 'objectively' real too. The approbation of others is clearly something which possesses this immediate value.

examination of human life, so far as this now unfolds itself to our daily observation. Yet, in order still further to justify this view, I would just allude to the omission of the important question how far man is the slave of his circumstances and the mere passive plaything of his daily experience. This omission is, of course, to be expected, from the view of will which we have seen to be adopted by the writer. All that a man does in the way of rising above the level of his life-conditions, of modifying the ultimate worth of life-events through the reaction of a bold and elastic spirit and the wise direction both of external observation and of the internal mental operations of imagination and reflection, is plainly effected by means of that very volition which the pessimists condemn as the prime source of life's evils. Into this ingredient in life's value, the extent to which every healthy mind is able to alter the sum of its happiness through an exercise of the highest activities of volition, I shall have to enter somewhat fully by and by. For the present it is enough to notice Hartmann's complete silence respecting the subject.

Passing by Hartmann's examination of the grounds of a hope in a future life, which obviously passes beyond the region of accessible facts, we have now to turn to the second step in the empirical proof of pessimism, namely, the arguments by which the attainment of happiness in the future is shown to be impossible. Life as it now exists is evil, and the progress of things, so far from being towards happiness, is in the opposite direction. The dream of a happy race in the future is but a vain temporary resort of the deluded hoper who finds himself driven from his first position that happiness is now attainable.

It is obvious that the inquiry into the worth of ad-

vancing civilisation and of the historical development of mankind cannot well be carried out on empirical data only. It involves numerous and complex scientific data, such as generalisations of history, not to speak of biological conceptions as to the nature and laws of human development. Nevertheless, Hartmann, with whom we are still mainly concerned, trusts for the most part to the same kind of calculation as that employed in measuring the value of contemporary life; and, accordingly, one cannot do better than examine the results here reached in connection with those of the first computation.

The only conception of progress,[1] having any pretence to scientific value, which is given us by Schopenhauer and Hartmann as a ground for their unfavourable conclusion, is that of the growth of intelligence, or the gradual emancipation of intellect from will. To make this idea a scientific conception it must, of course, be separated from its metaphysical surroundings. Taken in this light it may be said to represent an accepted truth, namely, that social progress depends to a large extent on intellectual development. But it is manifest that this idea is of no use to the pessimist without the presupposition that life is, in reality, and always must be, a balance of evil. Neither Schopenhauer nor Hartmann asserts that intellectual growth is an evil in itself; it simply brings an increase of misery in its train because it makes an end of all fond illusions. Hence this idea cannot be said to contribute to the proof of the main positions of pessimism. It merely tells us that if pessimism is true, we are, as the world moves

[1] I am compelled to use this term in spite of its associations with improvement. The reader will be good enough to understand that it is here employed not as 'a question-begging epithet,' but simply as an expression for the kind of change brought about by the general movement of affairs, and more especially for the direction manifested by social change.

along, gradually learning its truth, and so in a fair way of receiving whatever of disappointment, despair, or gloomy quiescence this knowledge is fitted to impart.

At the same time it is well to point out that the idea of human progress as a purely intellectual movement is a bold assumption for which the best and most scientific theories of history afford no sort of ground, but which they rather tend to refute. Even Buckle allowed that social development involved moral as well as other kinds of improvement, though he regarded these as limited by the amount of intellectual advancement. Hartmann, who, as I have observed, looks on the amount of immorality in the world as a constant quantity, cannot, of course, allow that progress has any effect in this direction. But his whole conception of history is manifestly derived from his metaphysical principles, and makes no claim on the serious attention of a scientific mind.

Leaving then the pessimists' view of history as a whole, let us examine the empirical arguments by which Hartmann seeks to show that the world is not improving. The mode of computation adopted here is, as I have said, much the same as that employed in the foregoing inquiry, and consequently we shall be able to pass very quickly over this part of our examination.

In estimating the facts of human progress, Hartmann does not pass again under review his 'scheme' of human activities or conditions. He considers that in examining their nature in relation to the possibility of a present human happiness, he has to a large extent demonstrated their unfitness to become the conditions or sources of happiness in any future period of human development. He emphasises more particularly the tendency of progress to bring about disillusion touching the worth of such things as the approval

of others. On this head nothing further need be said, and we may pass on to one or two points in reference to which Hartmann makes some appearance of proving as a separate thesis that progress does not involve improvement.

For example, it is commonly supposed that progress, since it includes scientific discovery, includes also the growth of the remedial art, and, consequently, the diminution of disease. This, says Hartmann, with oracular solemnity, is an illusion; sicknesses increase 'in a more rapid progression' than their remedies. How do you prove this? the reader may perhaps ask. No answer. Here surely the much-talked of 'process of calculation' becomes too microscopic a thing for the limits of ordinary vision.

Again, it is generally believed by the naïve intelligence which has not yet undergone the severe discipline of pessimism, that industrial progress and the discoveries of practical science have done some little to elevate man's material happiness. As to the useful arts, Hartmann does, indeed, make the large concession that they have effected something in this direction. But how much? 'Manufactures, steam-boats, railways, and telegraphs have achieved nothing positive for the happiness of mankind, they have only lessened a part of the obstacles by which man was heretofore hemmed in and oppressed.' One naturally asks whether the numerous products of manufacture which enter into the home comfort and luxury of all classes, whether the ability of making an autumn trip to New York and San Francisco, is nothing but the removal of an obstacle to pleasure, and effects nothing in the way of positive gratification. But in bringing his calculation to a close, Hartmann appears to grow rather disdainful of nice distinctions.

But further, even if the increase of material wealth has brought more comfort to certain classes, there will always remain, says Hartmann, that undermost stratum of population which has more hunger than it can satisfy. Why so? the simple reader may ask. Because of the multiplication of the population, which will always go on up to the point of bare physical existence. But are not economists, including even Malthus himself, agreed that population has a tendency to regulate itself with growing intelligence and moral restraint? No answer. Here again, then, we have not the substance but only the shadow of an argument.

Once more, does not social development bring about moral improvement, the growth of sympathy, and so the mutual increase of individual happiness? No, says Hartmann. On the whole, the same ratio of egoism and benevolence is to be found in all ages and in all countries. Civilisation has no effect on the impulses of wrong-doing, it simply alters the form of their manifestation. Moral depravity has simply 'laid aside the horse's foot and now stalks about in a dress-coat.' Let us be grateful: here we seem to find something like calculation again. But what kind of calculation? By what possible standard of measurement, it may be asked, does Hartmann prove that the sum of misery growing out of the fierce uncontrolled passions of savage races is equalled by the sum of misery arising from the prudentially restrained but still active immoral tendencies of civilised society? The calculation resolves itself again into the roughest of guesses, which, after reflection, does not even prove to have been a shrewd one. As to the growth of sympathy through the increase of the feeling of solidarity among individuals and even whole peoples, Hartmann hardly condescends to say anything. He does, indeed, tell us that

social advance with the growth of social aspiration brings about certain alleviations in the struggle with want through the principle of solidarity; but then he contends that these results are only a diminution of evils, never the attainment of a positive good. As we have seen, Hartmann follows Schopenhauer in regarding sympathy as having to do with suffering only, and does not recognise it under the form of a mutual participation in pleasurable activity.

Finally, it may be asked what Hartmann says respecting the influences of advancing science and art on human happiness. May not these at some distant time, when extensively studied and appreciated, yield a considerable surplus of enjoyment? Theoretical (as distinguished from practical) science is regarded by our author only in its bearing on external good, including moral relations, and is said to effect no appreciable result either in material or moral well-being. The enjoyments to be derived from the pursuit of science are not dwelt on here. In treating of the first stage of the illusion, however, Hartmann tells us that with the growing division of labour in science the joy of original discovery will be reduced to a vanishing quantity. This is a bold assertion, since it might appear to an ordinary intelligence that the spread of scientific activity over a much larger field would involve an increase in any enjoyment connected with this activity. It is plain, however, that Hartmann assigns no importance to the pleasures connected with the receptive side of scientific study (which he thinks are more than counterbalanced by the pains of effort), and that the pleasure of science is with him, as with Schopenhauer, the intense delight which is the peculiar prerogative of creative genius. Such an arbitrary limitation does not call for further remark.

With respect to art, our author allows that 'the receptive enjoyment' (as distinguished from the productive) is a considerable quantity. Yet he does not enter on the inquiry how far this may in the future become an ingredient of the daily life of all classes of society. All that he says with respect to the progress of art is that it is not to be over-estimated, since though our modern art is richer in ideas it is less perfect in form than classic art. This, of course, does not prove much, since it is a question whether the step from Greek to contemporary art is to be taken as a link in the chain of art-progress. What one really wants to know, is not whether a certain people in antiquity reached a development of art which is as high as any modern development, but (*a*) whether there is a general tendency for art to improve as national life as a whole, and the human race move onward; (*b*) whether this same social development is not accompanied by a general growth of artistic sense; and (*c*) whether this twofold æsthetic advance does not involve a very large addition to the sum of human enjoyment. But this is not the first time we have found Hartmann displaying a singular skill in missing the true import of a question.

Enough, perhaps more than enough, has been said to show what Hartmann's process of observation and calculation with respect to the several constituents of human and social progress really amounts to. It has even less pretensions to a rigorous method than the process underlying the investigation of human life in its statical aspect as something coexisting and persisting at the present time. But, in truth, both modes of examination may alike be said to make but the very feeblest pretence to the character of exact numerical computation. Hartmann's method differs,

indeed, only in form from that rough mode of heaping together a few arbitrarily selected features of life which may be said to mark the boundary of unreasoned and reasoned pessimism. With very much parade of scientific method, it is essentially unscientific, inexact, superficial, and strongly suggestive of a pre-existing unreasoned conviction.[1]

[1] Hartmann's pessimism is dealt with in a not unjustifiable tone of irony in a recently published work, 'Der Moderne Pessimismus,' by Dr. E. Pfleiderer. Pertinent objections to its reasonings are also to be found, as I have observed, in Johannes Huber's 'Der Pessimismus,' and in Volkelt's 'Das Unbewusste und der Pessimismus.' Finally, Professor Bona Meyer, in a little work entitled 'Weltelend und Weltschmerz,' brings to bear on it what some may think an unnecessary gravity of argument. It has already been remarked that Dühring seeks to meet and to upset the pessimist's view of human life and of the future prospects of the race.

CHAPTER XI.

PLEASURE AND HAPPINESS.

WE have now completed our examination of the pessimists' arguments, and may gather up the results as follows: First of all, the metaphysical portico, so to speak, of this dark and gloomy edifice was found, after a slight inspection, to contain numerous cracks and flaws, and to offer anything but a certain and safe approach to the pessimists' desired resting-place. Again, the physical groundwork of the structure has proved itself, on a close scrutiny, to be essentially unstable, being built of nothing but purely fanciful hypotheses, and what is more, of hypotheses which frequently run directly counter to experience, and which involve incoherent and self-contradictory conceptions. Once more, the psychology of pessimism, when its tangle of unexamined ideas is unravelled, shows itself to be radically erroneous. Lastly, the attempt to prove pessimism directly by an appeal to observation, must be regarded as a signal failure, since the method of observation pursued is wanting in those conditions of completeness, impartiality, and precision, which can alone give to a method a scientific value.

Such being the fruits of our investigation, we may, perhaps with safety, and even with profit, take our leave of pessimism as a system claiming by right of invincible arguments the adhesion of thoughtful minds. So far, it has

certainly made out no such claim; and before it can substantiate its right a very great deal must be done in the way of a preliminary definition of the problem, and of a determination of the methods proper to such an inquiry.

In taking leave of pessimism, moreover, we are really concluding our inquiry into the complete scientific constructions of life-value. As yet there exists, so far as I know, no systematic attempt to ground a favourable view of life on a solid scientific basis. What has been done is very valuable, no doubt, but cannot be said to provide an adequate foundation for optimism. It is neither complete nor scientifically exact.

In order to illustrate this, let us glance for a moment at the quasi-scientific optimism of the last century. As we have seen, the English ethicists of this period agree for the most part in affirming the coincidence of the individual and the general happiness.[1] Here, no doubt, is a proposition which, if true, supplies a basis for an optimistic view of social and moral relations. According to this, it would seem that everybody most certainly secures his own happiness when he helps on the happiness of others. Here, then, we seem to have a singularly happy illustration of 'a pre-established harmony,' by which an increase of the unit shall result in a more than proportionate increase of the aggregate. But do the facts support this cheering view? The affirmation cannot, I think, be accepted as true, except within certain limits. As I hope to show by-and-by, a wise pursuit of individual happiness will only take a man a

[1] It is true the happiness of the individual in a future state was commonly referred to as a necessary make-weight in certain cases, but, in general, the agreement was insisted on even when the present life only is considered.

certain distance along the road of benevolent effort. It may be, and I think it is true, that such a prudential line of conduct will make for others good to some extent, but the converse proposition is certainly not true, namely, that to seek others' good is uniformly the best means of realising one's own happiness.

A similar kind of pre-established harmony was said by Adam Smith and his followers to reign in the region of industrial activity. The material interests of a community are best promoted when each individual follows out unimpeded his own desire for wealth. This affirmation has long remained a leading doctrine of political economy. It is the cardinal principle of the modern economic optimists. On the other hand, recent criticism seems to show that the whole gain resulting from individual action and free competition is not so great as was first supposed. Reflection on the huge industrial evils of our time has led men to condemn our present system as radically bad, and to recommend in its place some mode of organisation of industrial operations. I cannot here enter into the burning question of socialism, and the desirability of an amalgamation of capital and labour in some scheme of co-operative production. Enough has been said to show that the harmony of the individual and the collective interests in industrial operations, is by no means so self-evident as its first hopeful propounders were disposed to believe.

I would by no means say that there is nothing really consolatory and cheering in the relations of the individual and the general interests properly understood. On the contrary, I think that a correct conception of these relations presents, on the whole, more that is pleasing and satisfactory, than painful and discordant. I would only urge that the

facts do not justify the very jubilant note of optimism in which the last century writers were apt to indulge.

Let us now pass to an attempt to find a basis for optimism in the supposed truths of psychology. I refer to Hartley's curious theory, that since pleasures exceed pains, and since association begets a fusion of mental states in which the weaker elements disappear, there is a tendency with mental development to reach a condition of pure pleasure. The first remark that this doctrine appears to call for is that in no stage of our existence do 'mental' pleasures and pains constitute the sole factors of our emotional life. The adult, no less than the child, is exposed to all the changing influences of bodily conditions, and these are by no means unimportant agents in the production of our happiness and misery. But again, Hartley coolly assumes one of the very points at issue, that is to say, that our primary pleasures exceed our primary pains. If this were granted, his conclusion would no doubt be valuable, even though it might be an exaggeration to speak of the process as tending to restore a paradisaical condition.

Hartley is perfectly right in laying emphasis on association as influencing and modifying our maturer enjoyments. I think, too, that much is to be said in favour of his view of the part which subordinate painful elements play in our recollections of the past, and so in our later perceptions and imaginations which draw so much from recollection. There is no doubt, I conceive, that in these composite mental states a subordinate ingredient of pain does serve to intensify the predominant pleasure. But, on the other hand, it is no less certain that a slight admixture of pleasurable feeling may tend to intensify the predominant painful character of a mental state. A bitter disappointment is

only made the more bitter for the momentary pleasing image of the object which is lost or missed.

In more than one writer, again, there seems to be something like a disposition to ground optimism on the quasi-psychological idea that pleasure and pain being, like all other states of mind, relative conditions, we should look on pain as one condition of pleasure, and so as necessary, if not positively desirable, as a means to an end. We have examined the doctrine that pleasure is a purely negative state, and depends on pain as its antecedent. Let us now look at the opposite doctrine, so far as it appears to assume a scientific shape. The question I have in view here is not whether pain is less real and positive a feeling than pleasure. This would not, I think, be asserted, except on metaphysical grounds. Considered simply as facts of our experience, pain and pleasure are equally real. The point to be discussed is whether pain is necessary as an antecedent to pleasure: whether, in other words, pleasure would be experienced just the same if there were no such thing as pain.

It is clear, to begin with, that even if the facts be as is here assumed, it can have no cheering influence except on the supposition that pleasure exceeds pain. For if it does not, the 'necessity' of pain would not be made out; we should prefer to dispense with the pleasure and pain of life alike. We cannot, therefore, interpret the idea of the relativity of pain as meaning what at first sight it might seem to mean, that a given amount of pleasure necessitates a corresponding amount of pain as its antecedent or opposite. What appears to be meant is that a certain subordinate amount of pain is necessary to enjoyment. In other words, we must have the other term of the contrast

with which to compare pleasure. Is this inference psychologically sound?

I do not think it can be maintained that pain is necessary to a series of enjoyments. We can all probably recall some happy experience consisting of a long chain of quiet gratifications from which pain was wholly absent. Days of pleasant sojourn among interesting scenes abroad, days of harmonious intercourse with friends in some lovely retreat, afford examples of such experiences. Was the pleasure of these days any the less real because no pain was present to the mind to supply the due contrast? I think not. What the law of the relativity of feeling requires, is that there should be constant change of mental state as a whole. It is possible to maintain for a long time a happy and even joyous frame of mind by a sufficient diversity of agreeable impressions and occupations. Well-arranged transitions from one mode of feeling to another, as from active exertion to repose, and from social converse to solitude, are fitted to sustain a continuous flow of satisfaction.

Still it may be said, we should not know and estimate pleasure as such, were there nothing of the nature of pain. No doubt our idea of pleasure owes something to the known contrast between pleasure and pain. We may say that pleasure is all the more precious because it is the opposite and, to this extent, the negation or exclusion of pain. But it seems to me that pleasure would still be pleasure, still be estimable and desirable, even were there no such thing as pain. All that is needed, in order that the mind may gain a distinct idea of any aspect of its impressions or experiences, is that it present itself in various quantities or degrees of intensity. Thus, though time has no opposite, strictly speaking, and though all our experiences contain

time as one of their factors, we are able to perceive it and to feel it as something real, because of the differences in duration which daily events illustrate. So pleasure would be consciously experienced and known, even though it were an inseparable accompaniment of all our experiences, provided it presented itself in varying degrees of intensity. To this it must be added that pain is not the only opposite of pleasure. There is a third emotional state, namely, that of indifference; and if we had frequent alternations of pleasure and indifference, we should certainly have a moderately vivid idea of pleasure as such.

Pain, then, so far as I can see, is by no means necessary to pleasure, and optimism fails to find an intellectual anodyne for the woes of life in the reflection that with our pains all our pleasures would vanish too. At the same time, it must be admitted that a transition from pain to pleasure is the most effective means of intensifying the pleasure. All contrast between successive impressions heightens the force of the later impression, and our pleasures are never so full and deep as when they are preceded by pains. So far, then, as a man places happiness in a succession of intense enjoyments, he may comfort himself respecting the presence of pain in life. He will see that occasional pain is necessary to the most lively feelings of pleasure. It is presumable, too, that even wise men might choose a type of life including occasional and not too intense or enduring pains as elements of contrast. At the same time, there will still remain the alternative ideal of a quiet flow of moderate enjoyment, and the man who adopts this conception will find little or nothing cheering in the doctrine of the relativity of pain.

Among the other attempts to discover a scientific basis

for optimism, the modern idea of progress, so far as it is based on historical data and biological principles, claims our notice. This idea, though as yet we are unable to appreciate its full scientific import, promises, I think, the most certain basis of a hopeful view of the world. This I hope to show by-and-by. It is to be remarked, however, that the worth of progress can only be properly appreciated after we have reached some rough notion of the possibilities of the individual human life in all times. It by no means follows that because with social progress we are improving, we are adding to a positive good, or are even in the way of reaching it. The improvement may, after all, consist in a tendency to reduce to a minimum the balance of misery which, according to the pessimist, belongs to human life in all its conditions.

What is wanted is a truly scientific attempt to define happiness and its conditions, and to determine whether the average external circumstances of human life realise these conditions. While much has been done in a fragmentary way towards solving this large and complicated problem, it has not, so far as I know, been dealt with as a whole. Modern pessimism distinctly urges this problem on our attention, and in this and the following chapter I shall attempt to indicate the various lines of inquiry of which this investigation must consist. The reader must not look for an exact solution in this place, though it may be possible to determine approximately the direction in which, if anywhere, a future solution will be found. It will be sufficient in this place to prepare the way for a subsequent and more exhaustive working out of the problem, and at the same time to show whether a perfectly certain and exact conclusion is, in the nature of the inquiry, to be counted on.

Life, according to our present stand-point, is to be estimated solely by the standard of pleasure and pain. That is good which somehow lessens pain or increases pleasure; and any moment of life, and any circumstances of life, have a positive value only when the sum of pleasure is greater than that of pain. Such being the standard of value, our inquiry naturally commences with an investigation into the immediate conditions, mental and bodily, of pleasure and pain. Before we can know whether an excess of pleasure in life is possible or probable, it seems necessary to understand the way in which pleasure and pain arise.

Now a complete scientific doctrine of pleasure and pain, in other words, a systematic science of hedonics, has, as yet, no existence. Many attempts have been made, from Aristotle downwards, to define the universal conditions of pleasure and pain, but it cannot be said that men have so far agreed what these conditions really are. The current generalisations on the subject appear for the most part to be too wide, and the plausible theory fails at certain points to cover the facts. Thus, for example, it is exceedingly doubtful whether certain pains of the senses, such as bitter tastes, can be brought, as Wundt seeks to bring them, along with all other modes of pain, under the principle of excessive stimulation. And, again, it is hardly manifest as yet, how bodily pains, as toothache and neuralgia, are to be subsumed under the same law of stimulation as the pains of excessive sensory stimulation, as loud and shrill sounds. Even supposing that these pains will bear being grouped together, the pains of desire seem, as Mr. Spencer contends, to form a class *sui generis*; and, indeed, the common way of formulating the principle of pleasurable stimulation implies that pain may arise either from an excess or from a defi-

ciency of mental or nervous activity. Again, the pains of discord which enter so largely into the higher mental sufferings, such as all disappointment, anxiety, and so on, do not seem very easily to lend themselves to a theory of excessive and deficient stimulation. It might, perhaps, be possible to bring these into one class with the pains of desire, seeing that all desire involves conflict of impulse with the perception of existing reality. Yet this would be to shift the ground of pain in the case of desire, which would no longer rest on a mere deficiency of action. In point of fact, as Fechner points out, it seems as yet impossible to bring all pleasure under conditions of quantity in the nervous process; whether, as he is inclined to think, it is possible to reduce all the phenomena of pleasure to one simple law of harmony or proportion among the relations of the nervous actions involved, is a question which, as he admits, is hardly susceptible of a certain answer in the present state of our knowledge.[1]

So much in order to illustrate that a general theory of pleasure and pain is still far from complete; and it fares no better, but rather worse, with the inquiry into the precise conditions of the various divisions of pleasure and pain, such as those of appetite, sensation, intellectual activity and attention, emotional excitation, &c. The exact boundaries of pleasure and pain in these various departments of mental life are by no means clearly determined, just because the conditions of these opposed states in the several regions are not certainly known. It is easy to say that in the case of every distinct mode of sensibility the susceptibility to pleasure is exactly balanced by the corresponding suscepti-

[1] 'Vorschule der Aesthetik,' ii. p. 270, *seq.*

bility to pain. But this assertion will prove on closer examination to be untrue. As I shall show presently, the intensity of pain by no means runs parallel with that of pleasure. Nor does the number of distinguishable pleasures always correspond with that of distinguishable pains. The number of pleasures of sound, for example, appears to exceed considerably that of the corresponding pains. Every change of harmony, of timbre, and even of tone itself (as to pitch), may be said to yield a new pleasure, whereas the pains are confined to those of excessive strength (loudness and shrillness of sound)—which are of much the same character, however the tones may vary—and of dissonance, which, probably, include fewer distinct subvarieties than the pleasures of harmony.[1] What one wants to know is the precise conditions which determine the point of stimulation at which pleasure passes into indifference, and from this into pain. And till we have determined this point it will be impossible to estimate with any exactitude the value of any particular region of sensuous or emotional susceptibility. We have, in fact, nothing but the rough and uncertain method of subjective calculation.

Again, there are as yet none but the scantiest data for a scientific measurement of the relative value of different kinds of pleasure and of pain, so as to determine how far the results of pleasure or of pain in particular regions of mental activity neutralise or outweigh one another. We cannot, it is evident, measure together sums of pleasure till their individual values have been estimated. This, however, is not all: we might be able to tell the ratio between the quantity of the pleasure of a given mental

[1] Impurity of tone does, no doubt, afford a distinct mode of pain, though one which is closely akin to that of discordant notes.

function, as, for instance, visual sensation, and that of its attendant pain, and yet be incapable of comparing this result with that reached in the case of another and heterogeneous mental activity.

It is evident, first of all, that the method of subjective comparison is, at best, exceedingly rough, and wholly unfit to give a correct judgment when two pleasures are bound up and involved in unlike mental states, such as sensuous impression and intellectual contemplation. The method of objective comparison must clearly be resorted to, but, as yet, this is only possible in a very rough and tentative manner. In inquiring, for example, into the relative value of the pleasures of a particular sense, say hearing, and those of a particular emotion, say that of laughter, we have, as yet, no physiological data for determining the point. If we knew exactly how much and what kind of nervous energy is distributed to the seat of each of these activities, and what is the exact relation of the quantity of the nervous energy of a mental function to that of the pleasure which depends on it, we might to some extent, perhaps, determine the point. At present, however, we have no other means of comparing these unlike orders of pleasure than by roughly measuring the intensity of single feelings, their susceptibility of protraction, and of frequent renewal, together with their liability to partial frustration through the presence of painful concomitants, such as after-fatigue. Now the estimate of relative duration may be fairly exact, but the measurement of intensity being, at best, loose and inexact, the final result can only be very vague and unsatisfactory.

At the same time, while we are far, as yet, from an exact scientific treatment of pleasure and pain, either as a whole, or as an aggregate of different groups, I by no means wish

to say that even now we are unable to determine roughly a good many points in the estimation of the relative quantities of these feelings. Let the question be, for example, whether the various susceptibilities of the eye are fitted to bring more pleasure than pain. We suppose, in the first place, a normal and healthy organ. Further, we make abstraction of the relative frequency of the exciting causes, both external and internal, of the eye's pleasures and pains, simply assuming that one is liable to recur as frequently as another. I think that by reasoning in this way one could reach the conclusion that the pleasure which accompanies the various impressions of light and colour, vastly exceeds all the pain which may arise through unfavourable or excessive stimulation, &c. It is doubtful, indeed, whether any single retinal impression of moderate intensity is disagreeable merely as a sensation, and the pains of discordant combinations are not to be compared with those of musical dissonances. There remain, then, the pains of rapid flickering light, of excessive light, and of over protracted retinal activity. Nobody, I imagine, would say that these would overbalance all the varied pleasures of light and colour of which the eye is susceptible. And if we include the pleasures and pains of ocular movement and of visual form, the superiority of the former class of feelings becomes still more apparent. Let the reader compare the number of pleasures derived from all the varieties of graceful, pretty, and beautiful forms, with that of the pains of too rapid and jerking ocular movement, and of the forms—if such there are—which can be said to be intrinsically ugly.

As in the case of visual sensations, so in that of certain emotional susceptibilities, a balance might, one conceives, be struck with tolerable accuracy in favour of pleasure. Take the group of social affections, including not only love,

sympathy, and pity, but their opposites—dislike, hate, antipathy, anger, and revenge. Supposing we know nothing about the comparative frequency of the exciting causes in actual life, a consideration of the nature of the feelings themselves would appear to lead us to decide in favour of their pleasurable character. If we reflect on the sources of pure enjoyment opened up in all forms of love and sympathy with others' happiness, the positive gratification attending the reception of all modes of affection and sympathy from others, the extent to which this sympathy expands, both in intensity and in duration, our individual pleasures, while it softens the pains; if, again, we remember that our sympathy with others' pains, tends to contribute a distinct element of pleasure, namely, the gratification of tender emotion or pity; if, finally, we reflect that even in the supposedly painful states of antipathy, anger, and retaliation, there is a distinct ingredient of pleasure which often serves to give the dominant character to the emotion, we shall see that there is much to be said for a favourable estimate of the group of social feelings.[1] One may, at least, urge that these considerations have as much weight as those put forward by Hartmann in support of the conclusion that sociability brings a surplus of suffering.

Yet, while in these cases, and probably in others also, the consideration of the susceptibilities themselves, apart from their exciting objects, would appear to lead to a conclusion favourable to pleasure, it must be admitted that in

[1] The reader will see that I have here confined myself to the phenomena of emotional impulses in actual exercise. If we included the facts of ungratified social impulse and of desire, our conclusion would, no doubt, have to be modified. So, again, I have not included envy, which, so far as it is more than a mode of dislike, is a form of personal ambition and desire.

other cases the balance would seem to fall no less distinctly on the other side. Nobody, for example, would say that there is any pleasure attending the function of the dental nerve which is worth being considered in view of the torments which arise through a disorder in this function. So, too, with respect to the organic sensations generally, it is indisputable that, supposing the exciting causes to be equally frequent, the vague pleasures which accompany the proper fulfilment of the function (as the feelings of unimpeded circulation, respiration, and digestion) are wholly unworthy to be compared with the deep and intense pains which arise from disarrangements in these functions, as indigestion, hindrance to respiration, local inflammation, &c. Only it is to be remembered that here we are supposing the conditions of health and of disease to be equally frequent.

Let us now turn to the other part of our inquiry, namely, the relative quantities of pleasure which attend different orders of mental activity. It might, I think, be shown in certain cases, that the whole pleasure accompanying a given kind of function is greater or less than that which accompanies another function. For example, one might conclude with sufficient certainty that, given a fair amount of capacity both for the lower sensuous enjoyments and for the higher intellectual gratifications of science and art, the latter greatly exceed the former. Even though it be questioned whether a single moment of supreme intellectual delight, equals in intensity a moment of wild sensuous indulgence—and this may well be doubted—the range and variety of the higher pleasures, the possibility of protracting them indefinitely through a constant variation of elements, their freedom from the after-feeling of satiety and exhaustion (not to speak of other forms of misery) which accompanies intense sensual

gratification, their susceptibility of indefinite expansion and enrichment through the grateful sympathy of others, these and other aspects appear to my mind to give to the pleasures of culture a clear superiority in point of quantity above the lower gratifications.[1]

Yet such a result as this would have but little bearing on our main question. It would be more to the point if we could show that the balance of pleasure, which seems to fall to a particular region of mental activity, as, for example, the æsthetic emotions, outweighs the balance of pain, which is apparently the net result of another order of activity, say the organic sensations. How far this is practicable I do not venture to say. Yet it may safely be said that such a process of calculation would, at the best, be a very rough one.

This leads us to the reflection that our present method, rough and conjectural at the best, though not, perhaps, absolutely worthless, is anything but satisfactory to a scientific mind. In addition to its being so rough and tentative, it is an exceedingly abstract method, and leaves out of sight the actual distribution of the causes and occasions of pleasure and pain in life. It could only tell us, were it a practicable method, how pleasure and pain would be related if circumstances were just as favourable to the production of the one as to that of the other. Since, however, our object is to find out what the actual order of things, or the average condition of the human mind, really is, this line of inquiry is plainly of little practical use.

It might at first be supposed that the defects of this method would be obviated by starting with a biological conception of pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain, says the

[1] For a fuller demonstration of the quantitative superiority of the refined over the sensual pleasures, see the note at the close of this chapter.

biologist, are the states of mind which accompany and indicate the furtherance or the hindrance of some organic function. Hence it might seem that where there is vigorous life there must be a clear balance of pleasure, and that the surplus of pleasure increases in the direct ratio of the energy of life. In other words, life in its fulness and completeness is pleasurable: it is only the disturbance, or the partial arrest and frustration of life, which is painful.

This doctrine, if adequately proved, might turn out to be a considerable argument for optimism. At least it would be a valuable corrective for the pessimism which connects pain with life in the direct ratio of its intensity. Yet we cannot accept this tempting idea as a satisfactory solution of the question. For, first of all, we have the obvious fact that a good part of organic function goes on without any sensible addition of pleasure at all, whereas a disturbance of function which seems infinitesimal in its relation to the organic activities as a whole, for example, a prick under the finger-nail, may be attended by an excruciating pain. Such facts as these appear to show that pleasure and pain do not exactly correspond in their quantity with the life function which is fulfilled or disturbed. Hence, we can hardly reason with safety that a considerable balance of life activity will involve any balance of pleasure, since the unimpeded functions may be such as are accompanied with the minimum of enjoyment, while the frustrated functions, though less numerous and important, may be attended with a disproportionate amount of pain.

If we examine the facts of human life, this conjecture seems to be borne out. It is by no means evident that life, as it commonly exists, is such a balance of healthy over disordered function as would, according to this theory,

secure a predominance of pleasure. So far as we can see the human race is capable of persisting even with a large margin of disordered function, provided the disorder does not touch the essential conditions of the life of the organism as a whole. Moreover, the amount of pleasure accompanying these essential functions is, as we have seen, exceedingly small. We have then still to inquire how the favourable and unfavourable conditions of all the higher and less essential functions are actually distributed.[1]

It seems, then, that there is no simple *à priori* method of approaching the question whether actual life contains more pleasure than pain. We know too little of the nature and the conditions of these opposite states of feeling, and what we know cannot give us any clear results. It follows from this, moreover, that it is impossible to deal with the question before us by bringing under review all the principal sources and exciting causes of pleasure and pain in the average circumstances of life. The very statement of the question must, indeed, show its insolubility. First of all, it is by no means possible to determine what are the exact results of any given impression, object, or incident of life. Opinions differ immensely as to the relative value of single occasions of pleasure and pain. And, as we have just seen, there are as yet no scientific data for determining the precise intensity of single pleasures and pains, and so their relative values. But this is not all: even if these effects were uniform and ascertainable, the problem could hardly be solved by a consideration and calculation of all the single sources of pleasure and pain. Such a compu-

[1] I do not touch here on the question whether life tends to reach a higher degree of vigour and completeness of function through the processes of development.

tation would, indeed, be out of the question, even in the case of a single individual. Nobody could reach a very satisfactory idea respecting the worth of his life by trying to get an algebraic sum of all the antecedents of his single pleasures and pains. To attempt to reckon these antecedents, even for a single day, could only lead to a very rough and unsatisfactory result. How much more futile, then, to seek to sum up all the immediate causes of pleasure and pain operating every day in the case of average mankind. Such a problem does not even seem to lend itself to the roughest kind of statistical investigation.[1]

One other road to our desired goal seems still to lie open. If, as yet, we can derive no assistance from a scientific doctrine of pleasure and pain, and must regard as useless our vague and scanty knowledge respecting the number and comparative frequency of their exciting causes, may it not be possible to reach an approximate result by considering the facts of pleasure and pain themselves as observable both in the individual's own life and in that of others round about him?

So far as the individual's observation of his own life is concerned, I think it will be admitted that the calculation is impracticable. Who ever tries to sum up his single pleasures and pains as so many units with a view to ascertain their net result? That an individual may arrive at some notion respecting the pleasure-value of his life, I

[1] Utilitarians have been quite ready to concede the difficulties of hedonic calculation. For example, Abraham Tucker says: 'I defy any man to make the like (cash-book) entry of his enjoyments and disquietudes. If he can tell that such a day was spent more agreeably than such another, it is more than he can always do with certainty; but he can never cast up the exact amount of the debtor and creditor side in any day' ('Light of Nature,' chap. xvii.).

fully believe and hope presently to show. But he cannot do this by making single feelings of pleasure and pain his units. First of all, our minds are incapable of retaining any adequate representation of the stream of single feelings, which is almost as unbroken as the stream of consciousness itself. Secondly, even with respect to the facts remembered, we lack the power of accurate comparative measurement, so that our conclusion must, at best, be a rough conjecture.

A third objection to this procedure calls for fuller remark. Our pleasures and pains rarely present themselves as pure detached phenomena, but intermingle and disguise one another in an indefinite number of ways. Each moment the resultant feeling, excited by a particular impression, is joined by the numerous little currents of sensation which constantly flow from various regions of the organism, and which serve to determine our more lasting and our fugitive moods and humours. For this reason we can never be certain that any single feeling of the moment is a simple one, and we cannot, therefore, set out with simple and indivisible sensations of pleasure and pain as our units. We have to content ourselves with compound masses of feeling, instead of simple units, as our starting-point. Now this would not greatly matter if we could make sure of the net value of our ordinary compound feelings, but we are rarely able to do this. In most of our emotional states of consciousness, the ingredients of pleasure and pain mingle and obscure one another to such an extent, that we are frequently in doubt as to the resultant value of the whole mass.

This risk of error is rendered still more serious by the fact that we are commonly swayed by a certain bias in observing our feelings. Just as with our varying moods we tend to single out and dwell on now the bright and now the

dark aspects of our past emotional experience, so, in observing a present state of feeling, we are disposed, by numerous subtle influences, to attend more especially either to the pleasurable or to the painful ingredients.

Yet one more difficulty needs to be pointed out. If we are to estimate the value of a given pleasure or pain, we must, it is evident, possess some precise standard of measurement both for positive and for negative value. What then is this standard? It is commonly supposed that, in attempting these measurements, we set out from a zero-point of indifference, and there is no doubt that we do try to follow this method of procedure. Yet there seems to be a disturbing influence at work here. In addition to any temporary bias which happens to sway our attention in the direction either of pleasure or of pain, there is a constant tendency to measure the dimensions of any given feeling, not from an absolute zero-point, but from the point of our most frequent, customary, or habitual emotional states. Let us assume that the average condition of a man's mind is one of quiet pleasure. He will probably think of this as the point of perfect repose or emotional quiescence. Accordingly, any impression which only just effects this intensity of pleasurable feeling, will be apt to be regarded as having no pleasure-value at all. A similar result would, of course, follow, if the average condition fell below the state of indifference. I think there is no doubt that all of us are disposed thus to measure our varying feelings of pleasure and pain, as oscillations on two sides of a line, representing the customary level of feeling. This being so, it follows that our estimate of the elements of life-value is liable to another error. We tend to miscalculate it by just that interval which separates a state of perfect emotional in-

difference from our average state, and our miscalculation takes a direction opposite to that of this average condition.

If there are these numerous and serious difficulties in the way of the individual's estimation of his own pleasures and pains, it follows that we cannot with much advantage appeal to personal testimony in order to ascertain whether the pleasures of life equal or exceed its pains. Though, by a sufficient accumulation of various testimonies, we might eliminate some of the variable sources of error, there would remain a certain number of constant disturbing influences which must always render any calculation exceedingly rough, if not wholly worthless.

It may be well just to point out that in default of these methods, that of the objective observation of others' single feelings can in no wise help us. We learn others' feelings in three ways, namely, by their spontaneous expression, their effects on action, and the voluntary communication of them. It follows from what has just been said, that the last source of knowledge, even when there is no such thing as reticence or duplicity, cannot furnish us with the information we require. As to the second avenue of knowledge, it cannot, I think, avail us much in determining the quantities of pleasure and pain which accompany the various single impressions and activities of the mind. We cannot be certain that a man's action results in an excess of pleasure, for it may be undertaken in order to avoid some greater pain. In addition to this, the force of habit comes in as a deflecting influence, leading men to act even when no surplus of pleasure or diminution of pain is secured by their action. Finally, with respect to expression, it is obvious that the most demonstrative person wholly fails to indicate the lesser differences of intensity in pleasure and pain. To this

it must be added that there is a large intermediate area which does not clearly and unambiguously reflect itself in external expression at all, or only through such fine *nuances* of change as escape our visual faculties. The aspect of the features in a state of repose during all the more common experiences of the day does not, it is evident, lend itself to a certain and definite perusal.[1]

It seems, then, that we must, in the present state of our knowledge, abandon the attempt to measure human life directly in terms of single pleasures and pains. The science of pleasure and its conditions is as yet unformed. Unaided individual reflection is wholly incapable of arriving at an exact quantitative result. The observation of the myriads of single sources of pleasure and pain in the world in which we live could only confuse us. So, too, any attempt to measure the number and relative intensity of pleasures and pains as they manifest themselves in others is condemned beforehand. Lastly, the truths of biology, though showing that suffering, being but the symptom of life's disintegration, is necessarily limited, do little to tell us the proportion which pleasure bears to pain in the average degree and fulness of life.

[1] The result of this is that we are unable, when observing others, to determine with accuracy the zero-point of pleasurable feeling. It is easy, of course, to say that all conditions of mind which do not visibly affect the organs of expression must be regarded as neutral; and the pessimists appear to me to imply this, if indeed they do not rather imagine that such quiescence of features is a concomitant of a slightly painful condition of mind. But this is a pure assumption. It is conceivable, and I think even probable, that perfect quiescence is rather related to a state of mind which has a slightly positive value as a feeling of quiet contentment (in the positive sense of the term). The reader will at once see the importance of this question when he considers that these 'expressionless' states of mind include a large part of our emotional experience, the prevailing tone of our feeling as we pursue our wonted avocations.

But, though the problem seems wholly insoluble when approached in this way, may it not be possible to deal with it in another way, namely, by transforming the question 'Does pleasure exceed pain?' into the other question, 'Is happiness attainable?' It will at once be objected that to substitute the idea of happiness for that of pleasure is to abandon the hedonist's point of view. Not only so: even if happiness may be interpreted as a mode of pleasure, it might seem at first sight obvious that if we are unable to determine whether pleasure predominates over pain, *à fortiori*, it must be impossible to determine whether happiness, that is (*ex hypothesi*) a particular arrangement of pleasure, is attainable.

With respect to the first objection that to substitute the idea of happiness for that of pleasure is to cede the hedonist's position, I trust it will be shown presently that happiness may be rationally conceived as a peculiar compound of pleasure. Nor does the existence of a separate name (happiness) prove that the thing is radically distinct from pleasure. For one thing, the terms happiness and pleasure are not so sharply contrasted as certain philosophers would have us believe. In common discourse people speak of 'a happiness' in reference to single and temporary enjoyments. They say they were very happy at some place of amusement, meaning simply that they experienced a high degree of agreeable feeling on the occasion. No doubt, happiness, as conceived by thoughtful minds, is customarily distinguished from pleasure. This is partly due to the narrow and popular, as contrasted with the philosophic, associations of the term pleasure. For the rest, the fact that a certain compound mode of pleasure is marked off by a distinct term need surprise no one who

recognises the mind's propensity to erect differences of quantity into differences of quality. Happiness may be built up out of pleasurable feeling, and yet, as a highly complex mode of such feeling, may assume a different quality. In truth, it is to be expected that this will be so, since a vast compound like happiness calls forth a much deeper sentiment of esteem than a simple feeling. Not only so. In one sense happiness does differ from any single agreeable feeling otherwise than in respect of quantity, namely, in point of form. The mode in which, as we shall presently see, single feelings are grouped together in this complex idea of happiness, serves to stamp on it a peculiar shape and character. All this I shall attempt to illustrate in the following analysis of the idea of happiness.

Let us for a moment turn to the other preliminary objection to this substitution of the idea of happiness, namely, the irrationality of seeking to understand the conditions of a compound before those of the elements are accurately determined. This objection disappears on a close inspection of the matter. Although it may be impossible to assign with perfect exactness the conditions of a single feeling of pleasure, we may do so approximately. And when we take a large aggregate of pleasurable feeling such as is presented in the idea of happiness, this rough determination of the conditions may suffice for all practical purposes. To put it otherwise, although our knowledge of the nature and causes of pleasure does not allow of our exactly summing up the single elements as they arise of themselves, and independently of us, it may allow of our estimating with sufficient accuracy a group of feelings selected and cut out, so to speak, from the raw material of our emotional experience by our own volitions. And the

possibility of realising the mass of pleasurable feeling thus roughly defined may be ascertained, even though it were vain to ask whether pleasures exceed pains, viewed as mere events in relation to which we are simply passive spectators. In short, by conceiving happiness as the mind's own voluntary construction out of the passively received materials of feeling, it may be possible to define its factors, and to assign the conditions of its realisation.[1]

I purpose, then, to discuss the problem of happiness as one which is distinct from that of a mere excess of one class of single feelings over another class. And in doing so, I hope to show that happiness, while a much better idea than single pleasurable feelings for our present purpose, owes all its meaning and value to these feelings. If this still appears paradoxical, I would ask the reader to reserve his judgment till we have examined the idea of happiness.

First of all, then, let us inquire what seems to be commonly meant by the term happiness. To the popular mind, the idea of happiness appears to be associated with

[1] It is worth adding, perhaps, that by a similar line of argument one may meet the objection to hedonistic ethics based on the impracticability of determining exactly the conditions of single feelings of pleasure and pain. It is quite open to a hedonist to recognise all the obstacles to an exact calculus of pleasures and pains, and yet to affirm the possibility of ascertaining with sufficient accuracy the net results of certain modes of conduct as bearing on the pleasures and pains of others as well as the agent himself. That, on the whole, the habit of speaking the truth immensely furthers the increase of pleasure and the diminution of pain, is a proposition which can be maintained with the greatest confidence even by one who is most keenly alive to the imperfections of a calculus of pleasures and pains. For an illustration of this position let the reader refer to Mr. Sidgwick's 'Methods of Ethics,' and compare the chapters on Empirical Hedonism (Book II., chapters ii. and iii.) with the chapter on the Proof of Utilitarianism (Book IV., chapter iii.).

some permanent set of circumstances or some fixed habit of life, which is supposed to have been the object of previous desire, and possibly of previous effort. People are said to find their happiness when they marry those they love; and, with how much reason I do not say, wedded life is popularly looked on as a chief condition of happiness. Again, a pleasing occupation is frequently spoken of as the ground or source of happiness. A man who finds a congenial sphere of work, with a mode of occupation which interests him and answers to his tastes, is popularly supposed to have gained the conditions of a certain kind of happiness.

It would thus seem that in the popular notion of happiness the idea of certain fixed and permanent relations fitted to yield recurring satisfactions and enjoyments is an essential element. Happiness is not the same as single feelings of pleasure. It relates to permanent sources of pleasure.

It seems self-evident, indeed, that supposing pleasure to be the thing desired, with the growth of intelligence men must come to substitute the idea of happiness for that of isolated pleasures. To aim directly at single perishing enjoyments is in truth to forego all the advantages of prevision, comparison, and rational perception. As soon as intelligence discovers that there are fixed objects, permanent sources of pleasure, and large groups of enduring interests, which yield a variety of such recurring enjoyments, the rational will, preferring the greater to the less, will unfailingly devote its energies to the pursuit of these.

Let us look yet a little more closely at this idea of happiness as an aggregate of permanent conditions of pleasure. Men find that certain objects and certain rela-

tions have more than a passing value as sources of pleasure and as safeguards against pain. A particular amount of wealth, for example, wards off the hunger, exposure, and so on, not only of to-morrow, but of months and years. Similarly it is a mode of securing a long continuance of pleasure, as bodily comfort, warmth, the gratifications of the table, of repose, not to speak of more complex enjoyments. Wealth thus becomes a more important object of pursuit than any solitary fleeting pleasure. Similarly with family connections, friends, art, private or public services, and the other enduring aims of life. Action directs itself to these as abiding sources of pleasure, rather than to any single momentary satisfaction.

Not only so, the seeker after these objects will naturally look on them as having a value *apart from* single enjoyments. They become to him life's good, life's happiness. This divorcement of permanent ends from single pleasurable feelings is assisted by the fact that in pursuing these objects we are not always distinctly conscious that pleasure is our end. This seems to arise from two circumstances. First of all, pleasure is not something complete and independent, a state of consciousness detached from all surroundings, but is simply the accompaniment of certain kinds of impression or activity. Our pleasures lie, so to speak, imbedded in various modes of mental activity, as sensuous perception, imagination, and so on. If we want a pleasure we must aim at some pleasurable occupation, must put ourselves in the way of receiving the suitable impressions. I may, indeed, fix my eye on the resulting feeling and make this the most prominent object of consciousness. In most cases, however, we have in view the whole experience of which the pleasure is an integral and inseparable ingredient. It lies

in the nature of things, therefore, that we should, in the main, seek not pleasure, but pleasurable things (ἡδέα, not ἡδονή).

Secondly, it is to be borne in mind that even if we begin to aim at objects with a conscious desire for the pleasure they bring, the influence of association and habit would tend gradually to sink the idea of pleasure in that of the objects or pursuits which are found to be its conditions. We lose sight to some extent of the conscious feeling which is the primary and even now the virtual ground of value, through habitually attending more especially to the circumstances or things which are the directly attainable conditions of pleasure, and which as such present themselves to our minds as objects of value. Thus it may easily arise that in all the later stages of active pursuit we seem to ourselves to be seeking the objects for their own sake, and not for that of the pleasures which they bring us.[1]

So much by the way in explanation of the popular separation of interests or desirable objects from feelings of pleasure.

Hitherto I have spoken of the idea of happiness as arising out of the perception of the enduring factors among external sources of pleasure. This, however, is clearly not the whole of the idea. Among the most pressing needs of the human mind is a vent for its active energies. The instinctive active impulses predispose us to action, and the frustration or retardation of action is painful. In addition to this, all activity within certain limits is pleasurable,

[1] The fact that men do apparently desire other things than pleasure has been accented both by writers hostile to hedonism, as Mr. Bradley, and by others who are favourable to a certain form of hedonism, for example, Mr. Sidgwick.

whether as a mode of muscular function, or in a still higher measure as an employment of the energies of attention and intellect. When to these elements there is added that which arises during the processes of volition from an anticipation of some good to be secured, some external factor of happiness to be realised, it will be seen that the total quantity of enjoyment attending voluntary activity is a considerable one. Thus action will be desired by the rational man, not only as an escape from ennui, or, to speak more correctly, from the painful sense of impeded active impulse, but also as something in itself positively enjoyable. Hence permanent lines of agreeable action will acquire a value similar to that of enduring external sources of pleasure. Such fixed lines are a part of the content of the word 'interest,' as also of the term 'happiness.' My interests mean for me not only sources of a renewable passive enjoyment, but also an abiding sphere for grateful activity. Art, for example, even to one who is merely a recipient, opens up a wide field for such activity. Apart from the action involved in visiting the treasures or in acquiring the objects of art, the very contemplation of a work of art demands a large quantity of motor activity in the organ employed, as well as extended intellectual concentration. Here, then, we have a second element of hedonic value in permanent objects or interests; they not only secure as abiding possibilities of sensuous impression repeated passive enjoyments, they provide as objects of action a lasting renewal of the pleasures of activity.

So much it was needful to say respecting happiness viewed as rooted in the external circumstances and the outgoing activities of life. Yet the content of happiness is by no means exhausted in this explanation. No thoughtful

person places his happiness solely in the external, even in that part of it which he himself shapes and controls. Happiness is said to be, in a sense, within us, that is to say, to reside in the internal conditions of our mental life, our feelings, beliefs, thoughts, &c. Let us inquire for a few moments into this second great factor in the idea of happiness.

Apart from the impressions borne in upon us from the external world, and the activities we exert in relation to this world, the current of our mental life is kept flowing by means of the various forms of internal consciousness, as recollections and anticipations, imaginations and reflections, longings and emotional impulses. These internal factors may be pleasurable or painful, or of a neutral tinge. All this unarranged mass of raw material has to be sifted and elaborated into new forms before it can enter as a constituent into the idea of happiness. By what process is this transformation brought about?

In the first place, it is to be remarked that this silent stream of internal consciousness is powerfully swayed in its course by the influence of that regulation of external aims of which I have already spoken. Not only do we involuntarily tend to think of that which occupies our active energies, every attainment of a really worthy result of external activity becomes the ground of a permanent mode of pleasurable consciousness. We will suppose that the action has had as its aim and result the possession of a certain work of art. The realisation of this aim supplies internal reflection with ample pleasurable material in the shape of an assurance of the enduring source of pleasure. It becomes a small fountain, so to speak, of agreeable imaginations. We think about it, picture to ourselves the delight

we may hereafter derive, both from contemplating it ourselves, and from extending this privilege to others. Not only so, the very fact of successful effort brings with it something of a lasting satisfaction. The reflection that we have obtained a valued and coveted possession is in itself a pleasurable one, and one, moreover, which is fitted to be renewed an indefinite number of times; for the fact of having gained the object of desire always remains, even though the possession should afterwards be lost, and the pleasure of its attainment consequently neutralised by a new element of pain.[1]

It is this abiding after-consciousness of achievement which gives its pleasure-value to all moral action. The feeling of success which immediately follows the execution of a difficult duty, is, no doubt, inferior to the pain which arises in a conscientious mind when wrong has been committed, and it is easy for the pessimist to say that the whole pleasure of morality is an infinitesimal quantity. Yet the fact that every new fulfilment of moral law leaves behind it a lasting assurance of gain serves to give to morality a much higher value than the pessimist would assign it. And what is true of the bare fulfilment of obligation is true, *à fortiori*, of all high virtuous action, the recollection of which may bring an appreciable thrill of satisfaction long after the actual performance of the virtuous deed. It follows from this that the daily pursuit of moral ends as a dominant aim

[1] It must not be thought that I am here and elsewhere falling into a weak optimistic way of speaking when I talk of a past attainment as a permanent satisfaction. I do not say that one and the same attainment is fitted to afford a considerable element of enjoyment after the first flush of success is over. Yet it is an appreciable element of pleasure, and though, like every other feeling, it tends to grow faint with frequent repetition, it contributes a modicum to the enduring internal stock of pleasurable material.

of life is fitted, if successful, to supply a constantly increasing fund of the inner material of happiness.

The internal factor of happiness is thus greatly furthered by that outward direction of voluntary endeavour, which, as we have seen, serves primarily to secure the external conditions of happiness. At the same time this internal factor is still more powerfully promoted by those exertions of voluntary activity which aim immediately at a distinctly internal result, at securing some inner source or condition of pleasure. All that is included under the term self-culture has this peculiar bearing on the internal conditions of happiness. Every action which comprehends in its end the acquisition of some inner intellectual or moral possession, the improvement of some in-dwelling capacity, must, if successful, contribute to this result. The consciousness of having risen a single step in the intellectual or moral scale is not a single fugitive feeling. It is a permanently renewable emotion. Moreover, the satisfaction does not wholly depend in this case on a recollection of a fact, as in the instance of the pleasure of reflecting on a past act of kindness (viewed apart from its reflex influence on the agent's internal nature). The consequences of an act of moral attainment are themselves permanent, consisting in improved capacity, enlarged resources for moral action, and heightened objective worth and dignity. The satisfaction which attends a consciousness of moral or intellectual growth is thus due, not so much to an imaginative representation of a past fact, as to the immediate perception of a present internal reality. The ground of this pleasure can, strictly speaking, never be shaken, and if the capacity for finding enjoyment in the thought disappears, it can only be either because the fact itself has become lost sight of, or

because the satisfaction which flows from it is more than counterbalanced by a sense of its incompleteness or of subsequent failure.

I do not propose here fully to analyse the pleasure which attends the consciousness of advancing self-culture, whether intellectual, æsthetic, or ethical. As I have already hinted, the enjoyment flowing from this source is much more than the satisfaction which arises from the happy realisation of one's past wish or aim. It includes, among other ingredients, the assurance of having certain elements of a permanent spiritual wealth, of possessing an abiding fountain of future pleasurable activity. One may further discover in it more special elements of emotion, such as the complacency which attends a sense of worth, the elation which springs from a consciousness of power, and so on. It appears to follow that the enduring element of pleasure which results from every such attainment is an appreciable and by no means inconsiderable quantity. Not only so, it is evident that the daily erection of these ends of self-culture into principal aims of voluntary action is fitted to secure a very important quantum of the active forms of enjoyment.

It seems clear, therefore, that the daily pursuit of these ends of self-culture, like the habitual aiming at the collective external aims already spoken of, will tend to bring about most important additions to the permanent sources of our pleasure. Such direction of volition alters, indeed, to an incalculable extent, the possibilities of pleasure which life offers us. It serves to select and to re-arrange, so to speak, the elements out of which we have to draw all our life-satisfaction.

A still higher element in the thoughtful man's idea of happiness is the co-ordination of the various possible aims

of life, external and internal, under one general scheme or plan. The development of intelligence leads not only to a substitution of permanent for momentary ends, but also to a due adjustment of the various enduring aims according to their proportionate value as barriers against suffering and as sources of enjoyment. The perception of the numerous and complicated results of action, of the various ways in which certain aims limit or interfere with others, leads to a conscious appreciation of each aim as a member of a system. This applies to the several competing external aims, viewed as a system in themselves, as well as to these in conjunction with the internal ends. Thus in the case of a wise man a particular external end, as art, will not be pursued to the injury of another such aim, as health. Similarly, he will not seek after a particular external end, as wealth, beyond the point at which it begins to interfere injuriously with the realisation of some worthy internal end, as, for example, intellectual self-culture. When this organisation of the several aims of life is completed, the individual conceives happiness no longer as a bundle of unconnected interests, but as a scheme or hierarchy of interests, in which each member occupies a place according to its proportionate value in the total sum of pleasure-conditions.

We may now pass to quite another group of elements in the idea of happiness. Hitherto we have thought of happiness as residing in certain large and permanent aims of voluntary action, whether external or internal. We have now to view it as dependent on still higher exercises of will, namely, those processes of voluntary attention through which we regulate within certain limits the course of our perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and desires, and so very materially modify the character of some of the

immediate sources or antecedents of our pleasure and pain. We have seen that human volition does much to transform the fixed conditions of pleasure by selecting, grouping, and co-ordinating certain ends drawn from all possible attainments of action, external and internal. We shall now watch its influence in a still higher sphere, in the economic management of all the existing material of pleasure, both that which is supplied by conditions of life lying beyond our control, and that which is reached by means of the voluntary actions already described.

The function of volition in relation to our external impressions and internal feelings is twofold, namely, positive and negative. It may either seek to restore, detain, and so raise the value of, a grateful perception or thought, or it may aim at excluding a disagreeable or painful intruder. Let us look first of all at the effects of this highest kind of volitional control as directed to external impressions, and let us begin with the negative side of this control. We all find ourselves exposed to disagreeable and irritating impressions from without. Our unchosen surroundings, natural and social, present only too many repellent aspects to our perceptions. Even that part of our environment which we have planned and built for ourselves is necessarily accompanied by blemishes, defects, and drawbacks. If we had no volitional command over our perceptions we should, of course, have to put up with these painful impressions. Yet no wise man contents himself with being thus the slave of his immediate circumstances. If he cannot get rid of the object which offends the eye or lacerates the heart, he can at least deprive it of its effect on his own sensibility. And this he does in one of two ways. If possible, he puts himself beyond the reach of the impres-

sion; that is to say, he avoids going where the object will present or suggest itself to his mind.

If, however, this is not possible, if the painful ingredient is inseparably bound up with essential relations, we must fall back on a yet higher exercise of volition. We must seek to withdraw attention from the object which cannot be removed out of sight. There may, of course, be reasons, moral or other, for not doing so; but where no good is to be gained by bearing the pain of an unwelcome impression it is recognised to be the part of wisdom to turn away from it. Let the painful thing be something residing in our bodily organism, for example, a distressing deformity. It is clear that we cannot in this case rid ourselves of the objective reality. Yet by forming the habit of avoiding the perception of the defect we are able in a sense to rob it of its subjective reality, for ourselves at least.

It is plain that this negative function of the higher volitional control is but the other side of a positive function. In truth they are at bottom but one mental process. To attempt to withdraw from contact with disagreeable objects involves the endeavour to come into contact with more agreeable ones. Similarly, to divert our attention from a painful circumstance or event present to our perceptive faculties implies the concentration of it on some more grateful object.[1]

By thus rejecting and shunning what is evil and inviting and detaining what is good in our surroundings we effect yet another and higher selective control of our life-material.

[1] Strictly speaking, the mind has no power of directly banishing an object (or thought) present to it: it banishes it indirectly by concentrating attention on some new object (or idea) which presents itself at the moment. With respect to a present painful feeling, something may be done directly, as Mr. Bain suggests, by a volitional restraint of its bodily manifestations.

We have not only gathered about us aggregates of objects which on the whole make a store of enjoyment; we now further survey and re-arrange our present environment, natural and achieved, choosing to dwell habitually, so to speak, near the warm sunny aspects, and fleeing the bleak chilly quarters. Nor is this all: by the still higher regulation of external attention, we are able to make a final selection of our environment even within the boundaries of those circumstances and objects which we are incapable of removing or bringing nearer. Out of the world which must be close about us, appealing to our perceptions and through them to our emotions, we in a sense frame one more real and at the same time more worthy.

Let us now glance at these highest exercises of volition as they show themselves in relation to the internal processes of thought. And here again we may begin with the negative function.

A wise man habitually aims at banishing from his mind all painful reflections, distressing emotions, and tormenting desires; and he does so for the most part through the simple contrivance of directing his attention away from the recollection, anticipation, or imagination in which the pain is, as it were, imbedded. We will suppose that a man has missed a golden opportunity of gaining some coveted advantage. The thought of this vexes and torments him. There is not the least advantage to be got from dwelling on it, unless, indeed, it be to stimulate future alacrity of mind by present punishment. Consequently, as a practically wise man (φρόνιμος), he will seek to expel the recollection by turning attention in some other direction. So in all cases of suspected failure and humiliation, and of dreaded future evil, it is recognised as the part of wisdom to divert thought

from painful circumstances and possibilities as soon as reflection on them ceases to have any practical utility. In the case of gloomy anticipation, it is, of course, desirable to reflect on probable and even on contingent evils, so far as is necessary for guarding ourselves against them. Yet when this is done it can only be folly to dwell on the painful possibilities. Still more clearly is it the part of wisdom to turn attention away from future events against which we cannot, in the nature of things, provide. There is no sane person but seeks to put away the thought of death as a process of painful decline from life, though he may wisely seek to bear the fact of death in mind so far as the reflection can influence the conduct of life.

I do not here inquire how far this self-control is realisable. It is enough that we aim at it, and look on it as rational to do so. It seems to follow, then, clearly enough that this internal direction of will is of a nature to modify very essentially the proportions of pleasure and pain as they would present themselves in a purely passive reflection of external life, even as shaped and reshaped by those operations of active pursuit and subsequent selection already described.

It may be well, perhaps, to point out how this negative control is fitted to release us from that burden and torment of desire which, according to the pessimist, is the prime source of life's misery. Desire, as a painful and discordant state of mind, arises, as we have seen, when volitional impulse is to some extent frustrated. Since the desired object is for the present at least placed beyond our reach, it obviously becomes the part of wisdom to relinquish the volition altogether, if this can be effected. How this is to be done I have already suggested. By turning thought from the desired object to new objects of perception or reflection, by somehow

disengaging attention from the idea of the coveted possession and concentrating it on some foreign subject, we seek to release ourselves from the pressure of desire. In this way the wise man seeks to keep his desires within the boundaries of possibility. He learns to abandon the wild, foolish, unguided longings of youth, and endeavours to satisfy himself, in a sense, with hopes and aims which rest on a basis of fact.

So much as to the negative function of will in this internal economy of the mental store. Let us now glance at the positive function. As in the case of the external direction of attention, so in that of the internal, the positive action is involved in the negative one. To divert attention from a painful subject of reflection is at the same time to concentrate it on something which is not painful. This process of fixing thought on pleasurable subjects is one which takes a very high place in the idea of happiness conceived as something which the individual has to shape for himself. It includes, first of all, the selection of agreeable recollections, the dwelling by choice on the brightest and gladdest moments of the past, the conscious awakening of the echoes of an exploded laughter and the re-illumination of a light that has ceased to shine in reality.

It may be said, perhaps, that such a course of action can be no part of a wise control of pleasurable material, since to reflect on an extinguished joy cannot be pure pleasure. Possibly not; yet the total feeling, even when an undertone of regret makes itself heard, is, as we have already seen, recognised as a mode of quiet enjoyment. Not only so; the perfect volitional control of thought implies that we lose ourselves in a vivid imaginative reproduction of the past delight, and turn away as far as possible from the fact that it is past. Such an ideal re-creation of the past

may be followed by an after-feeling of regretful longing. Yet, so long as the mind is absorbed in the imagination itself, the condition is one of pleasure. And an ideally perfect will would secure this pleasure at the least cost of such regret.

Just as this positive control of thought reaches to the contents of memory, so it includes the regions of anticipation. In quietly forecasting the future, there is ample room for selecting bright and cheering probabilities and possibilities without risk of lapsing into a foolish practical heedlessness. After all practical precautions have been taken, there remains for hours of leisure a wide field for this selective prevision of future good. At these times, a wise man will seek not only to banish gloomy forebodings, but also to hold and retain images of future good. He will let his prospective eye linger on the warm lights that here and there glimmer forth from the unpenetrated darkness, and thus enjoy in a sense beforehand moments of gladness which but for this anticipation may never be enjoyed at all. More especially he will linger in thought on those future possibilities of enjoyment which are largely guaranteed by his own voluntary endeavours. In this way, the pangs of desire which spring from undisciplined active impulse will be exchanged for the delights of anticipation, where active impulse is trained to move in open and accessible paths, and becomes consolidated in far-reaching and sustained volition.

Finally, this direction of the internal mental processes will be extended to the region of imagination in the narrow sense, that is to say, the mental representation of objects and events which are conceived neither as past nor as future, but simply as vague and wholly unmeasured possibilities. Whether under the guidance of some poet-voice, or amid

the stirring suggestions of natural scenery, or quite spontaneously in the play of inner fancy, we may wisely aim to bound our actual world with unbounded regions of ideal beauty and delight. To do so is to create a new realm of joy which, while constructed out of elements of experience, overtops and crowns this experience. And where we are sure that all is and must remain unknown we may wisely seek to fill up the empty spaces with beauteous forms and happy possibilities, knowing that in this way we reach at least a present good in the very act of imagination itself. It is, no doubt, true that this pleasurable activity of fancy, when not consciously controlled by a firm will, is apt to grow too luxuriant if not positively rank, begetting illusory views of the actual world. Yet the wise man will discover these limits, and seek to give rein to imagination as far, and only as far, as the pleasure of it outweighs any possible injurious results.[1]

I think it will be clear, then, that in these internal orderings of thought and reflection the mind possesses a means of very materially modifying the elements of pleasure and pain which external life, however well this itself may be guided and controlled by volition, is likely to bring.

[1] This is, to my mind, the answer to much of the objection taken to J. S. Mill's advocacy of a pleasurable direction of the religious imagination. That any degree of such imaginative selection is injurious to a rigorous regard for truth can hardly be maintained, except by those who would go further than Plato and banish fiction, bad and good alike, as morally injurious. The real question is, how far such indulgence in pleasing representations can be carried without blunting the mind's feeling for truth. Mill maintains that in the case of an after-life, which by its very nature lies beyond our ken, the imagination of a possible good may be carried to the point of an aspiration, and even a hope, without affecting the sentiment of truth. To determine how far this is so in the case of the average mind is, no doubt, a difficult problem.

Such internal operations of will, together with the external regulation of attention already spoken of, constitute, indeed, the supreme element of happiness, being the spontaneous reaction of the mind on its varying store of good and ill, the upward movement of the energetic spirit which will not be content with what it receives from without, but is determined to give its own final measure and value to all the contingent good of life. More especially the inward disposition of material just illustrated may be said to be the emphatic assertion of the mind's partial independence of external reality. It is something which can be carried on whatever the external circumstances of the hour, whatever the results of our far-reaching endeavours. It is *par excellence* the creation of happiness by the individual himself.[1]

In concluding this rough scheme of happiness, it may be worth while to inquire how far a wise man possessed of the requisite susceptibilities would choose to make the good or well-being of others a constituent element in his well-considered plan. The reader will see that we are here touching on a vexed question in ethics, namely, how far intelligent self-interest would lead a man in the direction of virtue. At the same time, the point is clearly one of importance for our present purposes, since, if the idea of individual happiness involves to any extent a furthering of the interests of others, the whole gain of a pursuit of this object is proportionately increased. I do not intend to deal fully

[1] It is well to add that the foregoing sketch is not intended to be an exhaustive account of the conditions of happiness. There are other modes of increasing one's store of happiness, as, for example, by a due variation of occupation, so as to secure the maximum amount of pleasure out of a given number of materials in our possession. I have contented myself here with enumerating what appear to me to be the most important processes in the practical construction of happiness.

with the question here, but simply to propose in a suggestive way one or two leading considerations on the subject.

It must be granted, I think, that an intelligent view of the conditions of happiness would lead one a long way in the direction of benefiting others. It may be assumed, perhaps, that our wise man would choose to live in a civilised society, and to obey the laws, both positive and moral, of that society. This seems to be generally conceded.

But more than this may reasonably be asserted. A wise man endowed with a certain measure of social susceptibility, enjoying fellowship with others and the sense of co-operation, might deliberately choose to enter into certain cordial relations with others, and to surround himself, so to speak, with an inner belt of society consisting of congenial and sympathetic friends. The pessimist argues that we must always be the losers by cultivating such relations, because, each man being unhappy, we only add to our unhappiness by sympathising with others. Even though this assumption were granted, the conclusion would not be a valid one. For the gratification derived from sharing in others' joys is but one advantage flowing from such relations of amity. We seek companionship among other reasons because of the pleasure of receiving another's sympathy, approval, &c.[1]

Now these relations clearly involve reciprocal services, and though it might not be to one's advantage to interrupt a pursuit of personal aims in order to benefit another were there nothing further resulting from the act, it may

[1] I have already hinted that the social sentiments are fitted, provided the relations are fairly happy, to bring a balance of enjoyment. The fact that pity is not a purely painful state of feeling would have to be taken into account here.

become so when the action is a necessary condition of receiving certain favours in return, and of maintaining a relation which on the whole is clearly a gain to the individual. In the last case the services are not disinterested acts, that is to say, such as are undertaken for the gratification which immediately accompanies the performance of them. Hence these instances do not supply us with an answer to the question how far it may be a good thing for the individual to include the pleasures of benevolent action in his scheme of happiness.

We seem to get a step farther when we consider the whole results of a man's personal aims, that is to say, the objects which he primarily seeks as elements of good to himself. It is obvious that the person who devotes himself to art, science, or even one of the more common professions, as medicine, is certain, if earnest and fairly successful, to benefit others, whether he knows it or not. Even the accumulation of wealth by an individual may have an appreciable effect on the material prosperity of the nation. Now, since these results follow not as something specially aimed at by the individual, but as a necessary accompaniment of a course of action otherwise motived, he will clearly experience no loss if he make this consequence an object of conscious representation. Provided he is so constituted as to derive an appreciable element of satisfaction from the thought of furthering others' welfare,[1] he is clearly wise to avail himself of the gratification here presented to him 'free of cost,' so to speak.

[1] I do not stop to analyse this satisfaction. Suffice it to say, that it includes various elements besides the instinctive pleasure of witnessing another's pleasure, as, for example, the pleasing sense of gaining others' approval, and a grateful consciousness of power.

We see, then—what, indeed, is at once self-evident—that a wise man may reasonably seek to serve others either when his action secures advantages which more than repay him for the temporary neglect of his personal interests, or when the service follows as a co-effect of a course of action which would otherwise be pursued as advantageous to himself. We have still to consider how far he will be ready to sacrifice certain portions of his personal ends in order to secure simply the satisfaction of exercising his benevolent impulses. This will obviously depend very much on the depth and intensity of the emotional elements concerned, namely, the degree of susceptibility to the pleasure of benefiting others generally,[1] together with the strength of personal affection towards the particular recipient of the benefit, which affection commonly determines the direction of private beneficence. I conceive, however, that a man of a loving and philanthropic mind may derive such an amount of emotional satisfaction from the pursuit of others' good as to compensate him for a considerable diminution of other and personal gain. The familiar fact that men and women who have failed to realise their schemes of personal happiness have afterwards found a real though moderate satisfaction in a life of devotion to others seems to show that the pleasure flowing from beneficent action to the agent himself may be a very considerable quantity.

I imagine, then, that our far-seeing man might be led to regard others' interests to a very considerable extent even as a factor or condition of his own happiness. What the whole worth of these extra-personal aims to the individual may be, I do not stop to inquire. I will only

[1] Here there is clearly room for the moral satisfaction which arises from the sense of doing what is not only right but virtuous.

remark that so far as a person is capable of drawing gratification from sharing in and furthering the interests of others, the field of his collective aims may, by the inclusion of these outlying regions, be indefinitely enlarged, and so his life enriched by the addition of new and varied elements.

At the same time, one must allow that a perfectly wise man would not, if choosing simply what is best for himself, prefer to undertake the higher and more difficult acts of a self-denying beneficence. How, then, do such actions become psychologically possible? To answer this is to point to one of the limits which bound our scheme of happiness. In unfolding the above scheme I have spoken as though we had to do with a moral *tabula rasa*, so to speak, with a mind endowed with a certain number of emotional susceptibilities co-existing in a constant ratio of intensity, from among which the individual is perfectly free to choose those elements which yield the purer and the greater enjoyment. Such a supposition is, however, a mere abstraction. As we shall see presently, long before the individual begins to carve out a form of happiness for himself, influences have been at work, both outside and within the sphere of his volitions, which serve to determine his action in certain lines rather than in others, and which may determine it in a path deviating from that of his greatest imaginable personal happiness. To this subject I shall have to return in the next chapter.

Let us now for a moment retrace our steps, in order to see what results we have reached. We began by examining our various pleasurable and painful susceptibilities and their exciting causes regarded as single events, and then proceeded to consider the practicability of summing together pleasures and pains so far as they are known both to the subject

himself and to an external observer. In each case we found it impossible to determine the exact ratio of pleasure to pain. We thereupon sought to give a new shape to the problem by introducing the idea of happiness. In this idea we have found as content the direction of life, both external and internal, by an enlightened will with a view to accumulate, to render permanent, and to economise, so to speak, the elements of enjoyment of which we are naturally capable, and which the unalterable conditions of our dwelling-place render possible.

Now, nobody, one supposes, will question—what, indeed, we have had at every step to assume—that all parts of this idea of happiness have as their content a considerable balance of enjoyment. Even the pessimist will hardly dispute this position in relation to the control of the inner and outer processes of attention. To direct our attention to the pleasing rather than to the painful, must, it is obvious, make for a balance of pleasure. So, too, one imagines, the pessimist would admit that self-culture, so far as it is attainable, by adding an inner store of pleasurable feeling to a large extent independent of shifting external circumstances, makes for pleasure also. Even if we allow—what we certainly should not do—that such culture adds to our possibilities of external pain in the same degree in which it adds to our possibilities of external pleasure, there remains the fact that the simple possession of this culture brings a permanent mode of satisfaction quite apart from the action of external impressions. Not only so, such culture provides us with new and varied lines along which our wills may move in a wise selection of pleasurable activity.

There remain, then, for our examination, the external

aims of the will, such as wealth, art, social relations, &c., regulated, as we have supposed, by practical intelligence. It is, of course, open to the pessimist to affirm that these objects are fitted to bring as much pain as pleasure, that the pleasures purchasable by wealth, for example, are neutralised by the pains of fatigue, anxiety, &c. Yet such an affirmation can be shown to be immensely improbable. First of all, there is the fact that seemingly wise men seek these ends, and seek them not simply as a protection against evils, but also as a fund of positive enjoyment. What the most thoughtful minds have agreed in judging a thing of positive value must, I think, in the absence of all disproof, be considered as really possessing this value. If in proportion as men are intelligent they agree in ascribing a supreme worth to the will's selection and control of these large external ends of life, there is a strong presumption at least that they constitute a prime condition of positive happiness.

But we need not confine ourselves to this modest kind of plea. I think no perfectly impartial mind will fail to find on an examination of the contents of these ruling life-ends that they do contain a clear balance of pleasure-value. Wealth, for example, when pursued moderately by a wise man, and with a due recognition of its relation to other ends, includes not only the means of lessening life's evils, but also a power of greatly enlarging the region of positive gratification. The fact that foolish men over-estimate riches, and load themselves with what proves afterwards little more than a source of corroding anxiety, that they seek it unintelligently, caring little or nothing about its highest capabilities, all this does not touch the assertion that wealth is a positive good, an assertion which

is not only made by the large majority of men, but may be seen to be true by a very brief inspection of the nature and possibilities of this object of pursuit.

It may, perhaps, still be urged that this idea of happiness contains an inseparable element of struggle, and so of pain. To gain this complete command over one's life, to rise to a calm view of the larger collective ends, and to subordinate all particular impulses to a general dominant plan of felicity—all this, it may be said, means harsh self-discipline and fatiguing effort. I do not deny the fact. Yet reasonable persons will hardly imagine that such pain really renders doubtful the clear remainder of pleasurable conditions which is secured by these operations. All such conflict is in its nature temporary, since every new exercise of a higher and more intelligent volition tends to make the self-control easier. Moreover, given the conditions of healthy moral training in early life, much of the difficulty of this higher self-regulation will have disappeared before the age of full capacity for the larger happiness here spoken of is attained. A wise man, one imagines, will never doubt that the temporary discomfort and vexation of the first stages of self-discipline are abundantly counterbalanced by its later fruits.

I think it will not be contested that in this rough sketch we have a reasonable basis for the idea of happiness conceived as built up out of pleasurable feeling, even though a highly complex growth from these elementary germs. In order still further to see that our conception answers to the common notion of happiness, it is necessary to inquire whether it is fitted to supply the conditions of a satisfied will, to yield, on the whole, to the

man who entertains it a certain abiding feeling of satisfaction.

'Happiness,' says J. S. Mill, 'is not the same thing as contentment. It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied.' Yet, in the same essay, Mill distinctly talks about 'a satisfied life' where a moderate share of happiness is realised. This assertion of a twofold aspect of happiness seems to have proved a difficulty to some of Mill's critics; yet, with a moment's reflection, it becomes intelligible enough. A man who believes that he has to some extent reached the conditions of happiness which I have roughly described, will be at once satisfied and dissatisfied, contented and discontented. His feeling at any particular moment will depend on the point of view from which he looks at his life. In order to see that this is so, let us consider a little more closely the meaning of contentment in its relation to happiness.

In one familiar sense, contentment is simply a negative term, meaning nothing but the absence of desire, a state of inactivity and quiescence. In this sense the famous oyster may be said to be contented. When applied to reflective minds, however, contentment means more than this. First of all, it may signify absolute contentment, a state of feeling to which all of us, perhaps, rise at rare moments when some new and seemingly permanent joy makes the river of life to brim over, and causes all images of unrealised good to fade away into dim shadowy forms. This, however, is not the customary condition, even of the happiest.

The thoughtful man who is seeking to work out such a rational idea of happiness as that unfolded above will, I have said, be both discontented and contented. He is contented in so far as he is assured that his real life is in

some measure an attainment of happiness. In other words, he is satisfied with life as a positive quantity, as something worth having and worth retaining. And it is easy to see that, according to our conception of happiness, it must bring to its subject this kind of satisfaction. For what are the principal ingredients in this idea? Permanent external and internal springs of various enjoyment, and an inalienable control over these sources. Now the man who believes that he is gradually acquiring and adding to these permanent sources, and this power of advantageous management, is habitually conscious of having a fund of life's good on which he can always fall back. The assurance of these possessions constitutes in itself a continual ground of satisfaction, which makes itself felt in all moments of quiet reflection, and which enables its subject to surmount the thousand little vexations and disappointments of his life. Only in moments of irritation and unreflecting excitement will he be disposed to contemn his life as worthless. As soon as the agitation subsides, and he is able calmly to survey the regions round about and within him, he will reassure himself that life is still enriched with permanent treasure, and with a promise of growing enjoyment.

We may see further that our conception of happiness by making the regulation of activity and the control of desire a prime factor, finds room for the idea of a satisfied will—an inherent contradiction according to the pessimists' view. Our will may be said to be satisfied in one sense when we recognise that our action leads to a clear balance of pleasurable feeling, and this recognition forms an essential ingredient in our theory of happiness. But again, our will may be regarded as satisfied when we see stretching away before us a long vista of pleasurable voluntary ac-

tivity. In this sense, too, our view of happiness involves a satisfied will. A person who so arranges and disposes of his resources, external and internal, as to secure a constant flow of grateful and interesting occupation, is able to look on at each new point, and realise by anticipation the fresh outgoings of activity of which his life is so largely to consist. Thus he has a constant fund of initial or ideal volition: he sees where and how he is to direct his energies; and his will, that is, his instinct to act, is, in a sense, satisfied. This twofold good, the results of action and the action itself, may be said to supply the active imagination with an adequate and satisfying object.[1]

Yet while our conception of happiness is one that finds a place for this wholesome and invaluable element of satisfaction, wanting which our life could never be called truly good, it no less clearly includes the conditions of a certain kind of dissatisfaction, namely, that which we experience when we measure our actual life not absolutely but relatively, comparing it with our ideal of what it might be. Wherever

[1] Where these conditions are fulfilled, a man may be said to be satisfied with life as a whole, as a region of moderately happy possibilities. It is worth noting that this contented frame of mind is greatly aided by the cultivation of the social feelings and a wide sympathy with our fellow-men. In the first place, as I have already hinted, the incorporation of the interests of others in our life-end secures for our active imagination a much larger and more inspiring object. In the second place, a man ruled by these extra-regarding sentiments will habitually view his own individual happiness in the light of the average lot of mankind, and will derive a certain amount of positive gratification from the thought that he is sharing the ordinary destiny of his race. In proportion as he recognises the limitations set to the happiness of men in general, and further wishes to have no more than a just share of the good things of the world, the acceptance of his circumscribed territory of happiness will grow easy, being transformed, in the case of a perfectly wise and just person, into a glad acquiescence.

there is any power of imagination there must be this erection of some ideal, and the variations observable in the lot of different men and women are certain to suggest to us modes of pleasurable feeling and conditions of happiness which we ourselves have as yet been unable to reach. Now while a wise action of the controlling will leads, as we have seen, to a habit of diverting thought from objects which lie beyond our reach, it does not follow from this that the wise man will have no ideal towards which his aims habitually turn. In one sense, indeed, all the far-reaching endeavour which enters into our view of happiness involves an ideal, for the reality at which we arrive as the goal of this endeavour always turns out to be different from our anticipations of it.

This discrepancy between anticipation and attainment, however, is not the main element in the wise man's dissatisfaction. Life means mental growth, the constant enrichment of knowledge by experience, and the daily discovery of new possibilities of happiness. Thus, as we move onwards, we come to learn of new sources of pleasure, which may be either added to the previous objects of pursuit, or substituted for some of these as more worthy. That is to say, with mental development the prospect of enjoyable activity is continually enlarging before our eyes, and in this way our first confined conception of happiness is exchanged for a fuller and richer one. Now, in these processes of expanding vision and extending volition, there is involved a certain amount of dissatisfaction. Our aims, even when fully compassed, do not perfectly satisfy us, because by the time we actually grasp them we have descried larger and more varied regions of activity. I do not wish to underrate this element of dissatisfaction. It seems to be inseparable from

the very idea of an active elaboration of happiness by beings of limited intelligence. Nor is it always an insignificant quantity. Yet it is plain that a wise man will be able to reduce it to a minimum by choosing to dwell most frequently on the amount of good which is actually reaped and garnered, and by looking on the unattained portion, not as something missed in the past, but as a remaining goal for future endeavour.

It may be well to remember that in the case of a reflective mind these elements of incompleteness and dissonance in life will lose much of their depressing effect when they are seen to be the most favourable conditions for the full and sustained pleasure of active impulse and pursuit. The instinct of discontent with our actual surroundings and attainments is clearly the most potent motive to high and intense endeavour. The continual discovery of wider horizons of life seems to be a condition of ever-renewed activity. To one who sees this and who recognises the supreme value of vigorous and sustained action, the dissatisfaction just spoken of will cease to be an oppressive burden. Such a mind will be disposed to regard the whole field of active pursuit, including its inciting elements of dissatisfaction, as a vast good, superior to any possible amount of purely passive enjoyment, and to agree with Lessing, who was ready to place the value of the pursuit of truth above that of the object itself.

We are now, perhaps, in a position to judge of the objection recently urged against all hedonist conceptions of the life-end, namely, that pleasure can never supply a satisfying result of action. Two of the most eloquent exponents of the Hegelian mode of thought in this country, Mr. Green and Mr. F. H. Bradley, have taken much pains

to show that a series of mere feelings of pleasure which in its nature has no limit, and which cannot therefore be simultaneously compassed as a whole, is unfitted to be the end of wise and rational action. This is how Mr. Bradley talks about the hedonist's end: Happiness is a series of pleasures; but 'a series which has no beginning, or, if a beginning, yet no end, cannot be summed: there *is* no All, and yet the all is postulated, and the series is to be summed . . . . What is the sum of pleasures and how many go to the sum? . . . . Do you mean a finite number? Then more is beyond. Do you mean an infinite number? Then we never reach it; for a further pleasure is conceivable, and nothing is infinite which has something still left outside of it. We must say then that no one ever reaches happiness. Or do you mean as much pleasure as a man can get? Then everyone at every point is happy, and happiness is always complete, for, by the hedonistic theory, we all of us get as much as we can.'[1]

Then follows a good deal of the common sort of rhetorical lament at the futility of happiness as conceived by the hedonist. In much of this one can hardly see anything but ingenious trifling.[2] Let us see how the argument looks in the light of our present exposition of the hedonist's view of happiness.

First of all, then, one may quarrel with Mr. Green and Mr. Bradley for supposing that on the hedonist's theory we must consciously aim at 'a stream of feelings as our life-goal.' The idea of happiness, as I have here sought to interpret it, though undoubtedly based on feelings, is

[1] 'Ethical Studies,' pp. 88, 89.

[2] This has been well shown by Mr. Sidgwick, in an article on 'Hedonism and Ultimate Good,' in 'Mind,' January 1877.

something quite different in form and structure from that series of single, unconnected feelings, into which Mr. Bradley seeks to resolve it.[1] For one thing, it involves permanent possibilities of feeling, an idea which our Hegelian critic seems quite incapable of understanding. A single sensation of pleasure, say that afforded by one hearing of a musical composition, is, no doubt, fugitive; but the permanently renewable pleasure which lies latent, so to speak, in a work of art is not fugitive. It is as permanent as anything can be in a world which as a whole is a process of change and evanescence. And this is what the hedonist erects into an aim of action.[2]

In the second place, even supposing we were compelled to aim directly at single grateful feelings, it is not true, as Mr. Bradley assumes, that these supply nothing definite and satisfying. The point which would first and most naturally present itself as a fitting aim to a rational mind thus limited is a chain of feelings in which the pleasurable elements clearly exceed the painful ones, both in number and in intensity. This may be called the point of bare satisfaction; and a perfectly wise man who is sure that he has reached this point, will give it its proper positive value. He will recognise the fact that he has realised a life which

[1] The reader will not fail to perceive the analogy between the relation of pleasure to happiness as conceived in the text, and the relation of permanent material objects to single fugitive sensations as presented in Mill's theory of the external world.

[2] Mr. Bradley sets up the self as an object of realisation as something essentially permanent. But surely this is to make one of those very metaphysical assumptions of which our author is never weary of accusing English psychologists and ethicists. So far as it is known, our self is not a whit more permanent than its serial feelings, which, indeed, are all we know about it.

is good and preferable to non-existence. Nor will this conviction be shaken even when he consciously reflects that the preponderance of pleasurable feelings which gives this life its positive worth is wholly a thing of the past, that is, no longer a real existence.[1]

The other points at which a reflective hedonist will aim have been already suggested in our exposition of happiness. First of all, a man who adopts and seeks to carry out this idea of happiness is distinctly aiming (whether consciously or unconsciously, does not matter) at the largest aggregate or sum of enjoyment recognised by him at the time as possible to him. To say that this cannot bring any satisfaction because it is always possible to see more pleasure beyond is precisely the same, so far as I can see, as to say, on the supposition that action is an end to itself, that our realised actions can bring no satisfaction because we are able to conceive other unrealised actions; or, to speak with Mr. Bradley, that a certain amount of 'self-realisation' can bring

[1] Mr. Bradley argues that as soon as a man has had his series of pleasures he is in precisely the same position as before. This, I conceive, is again to set aside the testimony of the plain man's consciousness. The assurance that I have had a certain balance of pleasurable experience is itself a permanent after-source of satisfaction, that is, of pleasure, which, if all further anticipation and desire were absent, would invest a subsequent condition of quiescence with a certain positive value. In addition to this a past good clearly has a value in the case of a thoughtful practical mind as a basis of pleasurable recollection. The observation of people's frame of mind when they approach the close of life appears to confirm the conclusion that such a retrospective assurance of happiness may contribute an appreciable element of present satisfaction. The Epicurean poet is then, I conceive, warranted in saying:

'Ille potens sui
Lætusque deget, cui licet in diem
Dixisse, Vixi.'

no satisfaction because we are always able to perceive an unrealised remainder.[1]

Lastly, a still higher point is determined by the conception of a possible sum of pleasure or amount of happiness which is as yet undiscovered by the individual. A wise man aims not only at what he sees to be the greatest possible sum of pleasure; he further takes pains to enlarge and improve his conception by incorporating new elements as they are either suggested by his individual experience or derived from the instruction of others. Here, then, is an ideal aim higher than all previous actual aims, and answering to what we call the true as distinguished from the erroneous or mistaken view of happiness. It is, no doubt, nothing absolutely fixed and certain, since a still wider and more exact reflection may always discover a greater or a higher pleasure yet. At the same time it affords a clear and striking contrast to the individual's unaided and circumscribed interpretation, and, as the teaching of the collective experience in distinction from the individual experience up to the time, it may with a certain appropriateness be termed the objectively true view of happiness.[2]

[1] Mr. Bradley, though not always consistent on this point, recognises plainly enough (Essay VI.) that self-realisation always leaves something to be desired. Yet he seems incapable of recognising the corresponding elements of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the case of pleasure or happiness.

[2] Mr. Green takes great trouble to prove that the hedonist's distinction between true and false pleasures is untenable, since every pleasure is equally true to its subject. No doubt, this is so; yet if pleasure cannot strictly be called true or false, our conception of it may; and 'the plain man,' to whom our Hegelians are wont to pay heed, has no difficulty in seeing that he is in error when, through ignorance or inadvertence, he overlooks the greater and takes the less.

To assert, then, as Mr. Bradley does, that on the hedonist's theory we all of us get as much pleasure as we can is plainly erroneous. Even with his existing emotional capacities a man is always capable of living a life of fuller and more various enjoyment than that which his own isolated experiences would suggest to him. Nor is this all. A wise man may be taught to see that it is worth his while deliberately to set to work to cultivate dormant capacities in order to reach a higher plane of happiness.

Satisfaction and dissatisfaction, then, are alike bound up with the hedonist's end, as, indeed, with every other distinctly conceivable end of human action. All actual attainment satisfies; yet the imagination of an unattained territory beyond must infuse a certain dissatisfaction as well. How the perfectly wise man will deal with this idea so as to minimise the dissatisfaction which it excites, and even to draw profit from it, I cannot here stop to inquire. He will certainly keep it before his mind only so far as it shows itself to be a possibility for his own life. And within these limits he will seek so to dwell on it as to gain the maximum of stimulating effect with the minimum of painful disappointment.

We are now in a position to estimate the truth of the pessimist's contention that fruition or attainment always involves a disillusion of past hopes. Is the following picture of human effort from the pen of Dryden a correct one?

> None would live past years again,
> Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
> And from the dregs of life think to receive
> What the first sprightly running could not give.

So far from its being invariably true that attainment brings

less than hope prefigured to itself, it often brings more. In the case of a sluggish unwilling child, for example, hope is far below the reality, and all of us have been surprised at finding attainment far more precious than we had imagined. No doubt, men are given to illusory anticipations, and so far must be disappointed. But the wise man who sets his happiness in well-chosen paths need not experience this disillusion. First of all, he realises that he has had a portion of his gain in the very act of pursuit. Also, if his effort has been successful, he knows he has reached something of real value.

It looks, indeed, as if the pessimist here fell into the fallacy of mistaking the need of a constant renewal of single effort for the fruitlessness of effort as a whole, of supposing that the goal to which our endeavours point, includes a permanent after-condition of wantless inactivity. In point of fact, however, as I have just observed, the thoughtful man will regard this renewed demand for effort after attainment as itself one prime condition of happiness, which requires among its most essential ingredients an unbroken series of interesting activities.

But what, after all, says some querulous reader, is your scheme of happiness worth, even though it be proved to be realisable? You talk of permanent objects and interests as opposed to the fleeting single feelings of the moment; yet what are these objects and interests themselves but fleeting too? Is not life as a whole a fleeting shadow, and is it the part of a serious man greatly to prefer one evanescent thing to another even though it seem in comparison to be fixed and abiding? The pessimist has familiarised us with talk of this kind. Ancient and modern writers have

alike held up life as worthless because of its limited duration. What is to be said to all this?

I by no means wish to set up this scheme of happiness as something roseate and answering to man's most glowing aspirations. I am fully aware of the greed of human nature, and it is my firm conviction that pessimism is true so far as it denies the possibility of happiness conceived, as our voracious hearts are wont to conceive it in early life, as an unbroken state of delicious excitement. I am further keenly alive to the fact that our scheme of individual happiness, even when taken as including the good of others now living and to live, is no perfect substitute for the idea of eternal happiness presented in religion. Nobody, I imagine, would seriously contend that the aims of our limited earthly existence, even when our imagination embraces generations to follow us, are of so inspiring a character as the objects presented by religion. The view of the present life as an opportunity of laying the foundations of our eternal well-being, and of helping to secure this immeasurable good for the souls of our fellow-men, has, no doubt, its unique value as a stimulus to human effort. Into the reality of these religious beliefs I do not here enter. I would only say that if men are to abandon all hope of a future life the loss in point of cheering and sustaining influence will be a vast one, and one not to be made good, so far as I can see, by any new idea of services to collective humanity.

But it is one thing to see the limits of an object, another to deny it its proper magnitude. After all, this earthly life *may be* our sole portion, and it is well not to dismiss it from view too scornfully. Life is, no doubt, evanescent in a sense, that is as measured by the greatest conceivable

duration. But should this fact of evanescence make us despise it as something wholly unworthy of the attention of serious men?

In the first place, it may be worth remarking that the pessimist has no business to add the fact of evanescence to that of the worthlessness of life; on the contrary, if life is an excess of misery and so bad, the fact of its evanescence must be regarded as its one redeeming feature. To employ the fact of the evanescence of life as a ground of condemning it presupposes that we accord a positive value to its quality. In other words, a man may concede that life is a scanty balance of happiness, but hold this balance to be of infinitesimal value because of its fugitive character.

In the second place, one may deny that the wise man will despise life because it has a short duration. Even if limited, it has its value as determined by these limits; and it is not the part of a thoughtful man to overlook a good thing because it is a small quantity, especially if it is doubtful whether there be a greater to prefer to this little. Nor will he, because of the limited duration of life as a whole, omit to estimate at their due value differences of quantity within these limits. It is nothing but a fallacy to argue that because life at best is composed of a few years, a rational being should not prefer permanent sources of gratification to single fleeting enjoyments. The highest human interests, such as art, politics, and so on, have a *relative* permanence and stability, and a wise man will recognise these relations. The Epicurean poet, whose motto is *carpe diem*, or, live for the present moment, has, as I shall show presently, a measure of reason on his side. So far, however, as his practical philosophy means, 'Do not set permanent ends above fleeting ones, labour not for the distant

year, but for the present moment,' it has not, so far as I can see, the least basis of reason in the fact of life's brevity. On the contrary, as I hope to show presently, the fact of life's limited duration should rather lead a thoughtful man to be the more careful in distinguishing the greater from the less.[1]

Not only does the fact of life's limited duration not blind the wise man to its proper value, it may be said that it serves in a sense to enhance this value. Regarded as a whole, the value of existence is, of course, dependent on its duration, and the shorter it is, the less its aggregate value. But viewed in its successive parts it is otherwise. For one thing, the very thought of an end to life—while in itself saddening, provided life is happy—tends to intensify the present reality. We attend to things and become more fully conscious of them when they are set in sharp contrast with other things. Thus, for instance, a tourist realises and enjoys his Alpine surroundings the more intensely after framing a vivid image of the hot and dusty city which he has recently quitted. Similarly, a present source of gladness is made more real, a more potent influence on our consciousness, when set against the dark background of a future loss of the object. Not only so, all value is relative, and is increased or decreased according as the relations of the thing to other things are altered. Now, the greater a whole,

[1] The abandonment to immediate sensuous gratification which is recommended by Horace, as well as by the Persian astronomer-poet, Omar Khayyám, may, of course, with more plausible reason, be based on the *uncertainty* of life. If next year is wholly uncertain, then it may be the part of wisdom to enjoy the present moment. It seems probable that the preachers of the *carpe diem* philosophy mixed up the brevity and the uncertainty of life as though they were one and the same thing, not seeing that these two facts may lead to very unlike practical corollaries.

the less the relative value of each of its parts. The longer our life, the less important becomes each successive enjoyment of good. This is shown plainly enough in our customary modes of judgment. We think less of a joy missed to-day by reflecting that other like joys will follow to-morrow, whereas we feel such a loss the more acutely when we reflect that it may not present itself again. So the Christian who measures earthly life by an infinite existence beyond the grave, learns to look on the former as something insignificant. On the other hand, where the whole duration is limited, each successive part becomes more precious. This is well brought out in Pippa's jealous prospective survey of her one holiday in Mr. Browning's charming poem, 'Pippa Passes:'

> Oh Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
> A mite of my twelve-hours' treasure.

It follows, then, that a realisation of the brevity of life's path rather serves to enhance than to lessen the value of each single flower which grows on its border.

This I conceive to be the rational element in the eager pursuit of life's enjoyment, recommended by Roman and Persian alike, provided it be interpreted—as Horace and Omar certainly did not interpret it—as a wise pursuit of the highest attainable happiness. The reflection that life is rapidly passing away, that all beyond is uncertain, is fitted to rouse us to a tenacious hold on life as a present reality.[1]

[1] In the 'Rubáiyát' of Omar Khayyám both the shortness of life and the uncertainty of the future are interchangeably appealed to as motives for seizing enjoyment. Compare the verses xxi. and xxiv.—

> 'Ah, my Belovèd! fill the cup that clears
> To-DAY of past Regret and future Tears:

But, it will be objected, this teaching conflicts with the Stoical doctrine that the brevity of life should make us indifferent alike to its sorrows and to its alluring ends. Let us see how far this practical deduction is a sound one. With respect to the ills of life there is no difficulty. So far as life is suffering the thought of a final cessation and repose is obviously fitted to fortify us. Thus the same reflection which raises the value of our present good raises the value of our present ill, that is, diminishes it as ill.

But how does it stand with the other side of the Stoical creed, the insignificance of all life's aims and ambitions? In one way, no doubt, this conclusion is a just one. We are all apt to think that what is will ever continue to be, and in the heat of ambitious exertion it is easy to fall into the illusion that the treasure we are seeking to amass will abide with us for ever. So far, then, as reflection on the brevity of life means a recognition of the short duration of any particular good aimed at, it is, no doubt, fitted to moderate the eagerness of our pursuit.[1] But as soon as we include in this reflection the evanescence of life as a whole the effect is different. If very soon all our chances of good are to be snatched from us, this, as I have already said, is clearly a

> *To-morrow!*—Why, To-morrow I may be
> Myself with Yesterday's sev'n thousand years.
>
> 'Ah! make the most of what we yet may spend,
> Before we too into the Dust descend,' &c.

[1] It may be added that when people seek to moderate in themselves or in others a too intense concern for passing interests, by the reflection that in a hundred years it will be all the same whether they win or lose in the race, they seem to be having recourse to both of the arguments indicated in this and the preceding paragraph.

reason for making the utmost of each possibility of happiness as it presents itself.[1]

It may be added that a recognition of the fugitive character of life is the basis of a peculiar sentiment towards it, which sentiment in a sense increases its worth to us. It awakens within us that elegiac mood which, though containing an element of sadness, is not on the whole a painful condition of mind. The thought of the rapid departure of life's various good, sets, so to speak, this good in a dark framework which only serves to throw into clearer light its beauty and worth. We think how soon our dear ones, our books, our favourite bits of scenery, will exist no longer for us, and we come back from the chilling thought only to hold and cherish more tenaciously the reality which is still ours. In these reflections, too, we place ourselves in imagination at the end of life, from which point we seem to look back and bid farewell to our checkered yet much-loved abode. Hence the feeling of elegiac tenderness which these reflections bring us, and which, mingling with our instinctive fondness for life so far as it is good, makes it yet more precious by adding to it the touch of sacredness.

It would thus appear that the full recognition of the evanescence of life by no means robs this of its worth, but rather enhances in different ways the value of each of its successive stages.

It is worth adding that, even if the evanescence of the individual life must—supposing faith in a future state to be wanting—continue to exert a depressing influence, this ill-

[1] It is evident that reflection on the close of life is fitted to beget the habit of conceiving oneself as called on to part from it, and in this way to prepare one actually to relinquish it at the appointed hour. Yet this valuable result does not, I imagine, involve a slackening of our hold of life so long as it is still offered us as something fairly certain.

effect may be greatly reduced by that identification of personal with collective human aims to which reference has already been made. Though I have admitted that the thought of an endless succession of brief lives is not fitted to take the place, in respect of sustaining force, of the conception of eternal individual existences, I would by no means assign a mean rank to the former idea. On the contrary, even if its influence on the human mind may have been exaggerated during the first enthusiastic stage of its advocacy, I conceive that it is a grand, elevating, and highly consolatory thought. To cultivate the fullest and widest interest in all lines of worthy human activity, to accustom ourselves to the largest anticipations of human welfare, to make the growing happiness of the countless succession of human generations an object of aspiration, and, so far as possible even of individual effort—this, I imagine, is one of the surest ways of rising out of the state of dejection into which the thought of the end of individual life is apt to cast us. In this way the consciousness of our fleeting part in the world's drama grows faint, our narrow prison expands, and our wills find ample satisfaction when desire and ideal purpose swell to the full limits of our imagination.

More especially this fusion of individual ends with the great collective ends of the race will serve to sustain our interest in the world when our own individual life is growing feeble. The man who limits his view to his own personal good, must plainly lose much of the relish for life as its end approaches. Even if he has learnt to seek certain objects—as, for example, art—as ends in themselves, yet if he has not distinctly connected these with the happiness of others he will be apt to slacken his hold on them as he

reflects that they will soon cease to exist for him. On the other hand, the man who has accustomed himself to think of and to desire the good of others will keep this part of life's worth unimpaired and fresh even when his own individual part in these aims draws to a close.

Let us now glance back in order to see how far we have already travelled in our somewhat tortuous path of inquiry. We have found that the idea of happiness as of something which a wise man carves out by his own voluntary exertions, and sets up as his ideal of life-good, must be taken as tending to a clear and considerable surplus of pleasure. And this being so, our first problem is wholly changed. It is no longer a question of a given number of susceptibilities with a wholly indefinite number of external stimuli; we have no longer to calculate the net value of an indeterminate series of imperfectly commensurable elements which occur, we know not with what frequency, or in what order; it is a question whether by voluntary endeavour we are able to transform our primitive world or the arrangement of things into the midst of which the accident of our birth has cast us, substituting for this unsolicited order a new order of circumstances and relations, external and internal, bearing the unmistakeable stamp of a positive value. In other words, our present question is how far we are capable of dominating the primal conditions of our emotional experience, so as to extract from the mingled possibilities of life, a moderate, if not a goodly, heap of treasure.

The idea of happiness as an abiding fund of positive enjoyment has, I think, shown itself to be an intelligible and consistent idea. This result has already carried us far away from pessimism, which makes happiness unthinkable

by identifying misery with will. And here, by the way, it may be well to note the curious fact that, whereas the pessimist finds his world-misery rooted in will, this same will has supplied us with the one possible basis of a clear and consistent conception of a life which must satisfy by a sure preponderance of pleasure. Yet it is not enough to frame an intelligible idea of a life which involves happiness. We must inquire whether such an idea is fitted to be actually realised. To this next step of our inquiry we may proceed in the following chapter.

NOTE TO CHAPTER XI.

Difference of Quality in Pleasure.

It may be well to point out the relation of our idea of happiness to that which reposes on differences of quality among pleasures. According to this idea, certain pleasures are superior to others in such a way that no quantity of an inferior order could be taken as an equivalent for them. To quote Hutcheson, who has laid emphasis on this idea: 'We have an immediate sense of a dignity, a perfection, or beatifick quality, in some kinds [of pleasures] which no intensity of the lower kinds can equal, were they also as lasting as we could wish.'[1] The authority to determine this point consists of 'the best judges who have full experience with their tastes or senses and appetites in a natural, vigorous state.'

As by Hutcheson, so by its modern supporters in general, the idea of difference of quality or kind in pleasures seems to be based exclusively on the immediate verdict of consciousness. The only other arguments in favour of it known to me, are those of Aristotle (Nicomachean Ethics, book x. chap. v.[2]). These turn on Aristotle's peculiar conception of pleasure as the perfection of an active function,[3] which conception appears to involve the partial identification of the two as but different sides of one and the same reality.[4] If it be admitted that pleasure perfects activity, and that things can only be perfected by other things homogeneous with themselves,

[1] 'System of Moral Philosophy,' book i. chap. vii. Mill seems to have followed Hutcheson in his presentation of the idea of the qualitative differences of pleasure.

[2] These arguments are classified by Sir Alexander Grant ('The Nicomachean Ethics,' vol. ii. p. 328).

[3] Sir A. Grant remarks that the active function (ἐνέργεια) here perfected is, contrary to Aristotle's usual custom, regarded as purely objective (*op. cit.* i. 244).

[4] 'The pleasure is in time coincident with the act, and in its own nature is so incapable of any distinction from it, as to render it open to question whether pleasure and action ought not to be identified' ('The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle,' translated by Robert Williams, p. 306).

it follows, of course, that the perfecting of different functions, as sense and intellect, is effected by qualitatively unlike feelings. As soon, however, as the identical nature of a life-function and its accompanying pleasure is denied, this argument appears to lose its force. For the rest it is plain that if the term perfect be used in a loose popular sense, the argument fails, since two unlike things may be perfected by one and the same thing, e.g. a day's picnic and a bleacher's work by sunshine. There is a greater appearance of force to a modern mind in the consideration brought into view by Aristotle, that pleasures must differ in kind because they intensify their appropriative activities while they impede other and heterogeneous activities. It seems to agree with modern ideas that unlike effects must be preceded by unlike causes, also that pleasure does exert a reflex influence on the activity which it accompanies. Nevertheless, it is a familiar idea in the modern theory of causation that quantitative differences in a cause may be followed by qualitative differences in the effect. It would thus appear that Aristotle's arguments do not readily admit of being presented in a modern form which would wear the semblance of strict validity.

It seems to me that the qualitative distinction of pleasures rests on a misapprehension of the psychological nature of the phenomena. Pleasure is no independent, separate, and complete mental state, but is always a single ingredient or aspect of such a state. To conceive pleasure apart from some of the individual qualities in which it is embodied is thus impossible, and this circumstance, as we have seen, throws light on the fact that, in our volitions, we aim not at pleasure as something apart and abstract, but at pleasurable impressions, activities, &c. (*ἡδέα*, not *ἡδονή*). Now this fusion of pleasure with a whole mass of feeling having its other individual characteristics operates with so great a force on our conceptions of pleasure, that when we try in thought to separate this ingredient from its psychical surroundings, we unwittingly convey to it some of the very features of these surroundings. For example, we are wont to distinguish the pleasure of a pinch of snuff and that of the murmuring sea as an acute and a massive pleasure. Is this perfectly correct, or is it not more exact to say that the acuteness and massiveness belong in every case to the whole sensation or emotion of which pleasure is but a

single phase? Or, if the difference of extension in feeling be regarded, like that of intensity, as one of pure quantity, and so as involving the pleasurable accompaniment of a state of consciousness, it is surely a loose way of talking to speak, for example, of the refinement of an æsthetic impression as a quality of the pleasure which belongs to this impression. Similarly, I think, Aristotle's transference of the quality of perfection of intellectual pleasures from the intellectual activity in its relation to our functions as a whole to what is but the adjunct of this activity is a psychological error.

The hedonist need not fear, I think, to throw all the superiority of the 'higher' pleasures, so far as their value is estimated in relation to the subject himself, on certain quantitative peculiarities.[1] Although many of the enjoyments connected with the study of art, with social activity, and so on, are less intense than the so-called sensuous pleasures, they stand out in marked superiority on other grounds. Intellectual pleasures can be indefinitely prolonged, whereas the more exciting enjoyments of a dissipated life are in their nature quickly exhausting and evanescent. Further, these higher pleasures admit of prolongation, not only because they are but little exhausting, but because they are connected with a wide variety of impressions and mental activities. The activities which form the basis of the intense pleasures of the sensualist admit of very little variation. The man who chooses the excitements of wine for his favourite enjoyment soon runs through the whole scale of various impressions. On the other hand, a lover of art or of science finds a practically boundless area of variety lying open to his contemplation and fruition. Just as the higher pleasures may be greatly prolonged at any given time, so they may be frequently renewed, and for the same reasons. The person who seeks enjoyment in sensual indulgence must necessarily wait till the exhausting effect of the excitement has disappeared, whereas one who prefers the higher sources of pleasure knows no such necessity.

[1] It is curious to note how Hutcheson concedes, again and again, the superiority of the higher pleasures as estimated in quantity. Thus, he dwells on the evanescence of sensual indulgences, as well as on their diminution by craving and desire. So he affirms that the pleasures of knowledge and the ingenious arts transcend the sensual in duration. Plato, too, was not insensible to the quantitative differences between the higher and the lower pleasures.

Again, the higher pleasures, being largely connected with ideal representation and intellectual activity, may be much more readily revived by ideal suggestion than the lower gratifications. As Mr. Bain has shown, the impressions of the higher senses, as colours and tones, are far more easily called up in idea than sensations of eating, drinking, &c. The sensualist gains only a very limited amount of ideal enjoyment from the images of poetry or the spontaneous internal ideas of his own mind; on the other hand, the person who seeks enjoyment in some refined source, as, for example, in the æsthetic aspects of Nature, is enabled to reap a considerable and varied enjoyment from the bare imagination of the objects which delight him.

It is to be remembered further that the refined intellectual pleasures receive reinforcement from various sources from which the lower pleasures are excluded. The sensualist cannot, except within very narrow limits, share his enjoyments with others, and so obtain the added pleasure of receiving their sympathy, and of taking part at the same time through a reciprocal sympathy in their delights. The lover of literature and art, or the man interested in the practical movements of his age, receives a vast addition to his pleasures through these avenues of sympathy. Then there are other supports to these higher pleasures. A man who chooses to seek his enjoyment in intellectual or other worthy pursuits gains the esteem, perhaps even the admiration, of others. This sense of dignity, taking the form of the satisfaction of self-respect, mingles with his enjoyments and perfects them. As a gentle under-current of satisfaction this consciousness of dignity appreciably increases the volume of the pleasure.

While the higher pleasures thus surpass the lower both in their extension in time and in the additional volume derivable from certain extraneous elements, they no less clearly transcend them in their purity from accompanying or succeeding pain. For one thing, it is certain that when a man's moral nature is not wholly dormant, unbridled indulgence in the lower enjoyments will be attended at the time or immediately after with a depressing sense of unworthiness, of demerit, and even of disgrace. And it is to be presumed that few men are wholly destitute of the capacity of receiving pleasure and pain from the consciousness of

merit and demerit. However this be, it is certain that sensual indulgence is in every case apt to pall, and the stage of exhaustion is attended with a sickly feeling of satiety. I do not say that a skilful man may not avoid this drawback to some extent, but any free indulgence in these pleasures (and it is of such an indulgence that I am speaking) is certain to be followed by disgust and fatigue. On the other hand, the refined enjoyments of art, &c., leave no such disagreeable after-effect.

Again, the man who erects sensual enjoyments into a chief factor of his life-happiness can hardly escape the pangs of ungratified appetite. It is obvious for one thing that he must frequently find himself in circumstances in which an immediate realisation of his wishes is impossible. Yet this is not the chief reason of his peculiar exposure to these pains. The lower sensual enjoyments are connected with energetic modes of action (instinctive appetitive action). Hence, when presented to the imagination, they at once awaken powerful active impulses. These impulses, which, owing to present circumstances, must clearly remain unrealised, together with the feeling of discord which thus arises, appear to react on the imagination of the pleasures, making it persistent in spite of any volitional effort to banish it by adding an element of intense emotional excitement or agitation. Hence the prolongation of the painful state of desire. To this it may perhaps be added that the agitation or unrest is increased by the circumstance that the ideal gratification arising from this imagination, is, as I have observed, insignificant as compared with that derivable from the representation of more refined enjoyments. Thus there is no present satisfaction adequate to the extinction of the painful excitement. On the contrary, it is probable that a sense of the inferiority of the imagined to the actual pleasure may co-operate in still further swelling the excitement of discontent and longing.

On the other hand, he who prefers the more refined enjoyments is comparatively free from these intenser modes of desire. For one thing, many of these are nearly always readily realisable. Yet even when circumstances do not allow of a present realisation, the man who chooses these enjoyments will be but little likely to suffer from the more tormenting degrees of desire. On the one hand, he is able to picture the reality so distinctly, that he

derives an appreciable present enjoyment which is fitted to exclude desire for anything beyond. On the other hand, this imagination, though vivid and distinct, does not force itself into consciousness with the same obstinacy as the imagination of sensual indulgences. And so it is much easier for the will to control, and, if necessary, to banish, the thought of the absent reality.

These considerations serve, I think, to show wherein the refined intellectual and social enjoyments transcend the lower sensual gratifications as estimated by the subject himself. I have no wish to underrate the intensity of these latter. As single feelings they may be vastly preferable to many of the more refined delights, though these, too, I conceive, include intense enjoyments (*e.g.* those of new scenery and of music). Also one must admit that when moderately indulged in they may, with skilful management, be made to furnish a considerable sum of pleasure. Nevertheless, when we take the two classes in their fullest measure and set one against another as competing for the rank of a principal factor of happiness, there is, I think, little doubt as to which is to be preferred by the wise man.

But when we call these refined enjoyments 'high,' we mean something more than a difference in value to the subject himself. The terms lofty, dignified, noble, &c., applied to certain orders of gratification, clearly connote a judgment passed by others. We prefer on moral grounds that other people should choose certain sources of enjoyment rather than others, and we find that the refined enjoyments are a more pleasing spectacle than the coarser ones. That is to say, we estimate the worth of pleasures in relation to the moral or æsthetic rank of the activities of which they are the accompaniments. A man who prefers intellectual enjoyments to sensual has more dignity as an object, both for our moral appreciation and for our æsthetic contemplation. Hence the hedonist is not bound to make out that the higher pleasures are superior in quantity to the lower for the subject himself, for he is able to justify the supreme rank accorded to them by the consideration that they are accompaniments and indexes, so to speak, of mental and moral qualities, which have a vital importance in relation to the happiness of others.

CHAPTER XII.

THE REALITY OF HAPPINESS.

In order to determine whether our ideal scheme of happiness is fitted to become a reality, it is necessary, in the first place, to note the limits to which it appears to be subject from the very nature of the human mind itself. In sketching this scheme I have assumed that all men are fitted to derive pleasure from the same objects and pursuits, and that all persons having an equal degree of intelligence will, external circumstances being similar, lay the foundations of their happiness in the same terrain. Yet, it may be said that these assumptions are far from correct. As a matter of fact, different men do not find enjoyment in the same activities, but differ widely in their tastes and their notions of what constitutes happiness.

I am ready to admit that there is great diversity in men's judgments of pleasure and happiness. Our organisms are variously constituted, our natural and acquired emotional susceptibilities vary, and things which gratify one person may offend another. Yet this diversity of taste does not, I conceive, affect my contention that every wise man will seek his life-happiness in permanent objects and activities. All that the fact of diversity of taste proves is that men do not set precisely the same value on any given factor

of life-happiness. In other words, this fact tells against a hasty dictation of any one form of happiness as uniformly applicable; it does not tell against the general truth that all wise men will make permanent sources of enjoyment the object of pursuit rather than single fleeting enjoyments. In point of fact, however, it is easy to exaggerate this diversity among human tastes. Men often fail to derive enjoyment from objects because the appropriate susceptibility has not been developed; it does not follow from this that the susceptibility is not latent and capable of being developed. As a matter of fact, too, men do agree very largely as to the best sources of happiness. Whatever the eccentricities of human sentiment may be, we rarely if ever hear of men denying the value of health, some amount of wealth, or friendship as a condition of a happy life.

But, it may be said, even if men do largely agree as to the direction of a wise endeavour after happiness, they are not, as a matter of fact, free, so to speak, to choose from among all conceivable paths. Long before they begin to frame any systematic view of the conditions of happiness many of the lines to be pursued have been laid down independently of their volitions. First of all, there is the inherited bent of mind which not only includes certain emotional tendencies but certain active dispositions as well. We remark in quite young children a definite inclination to a particular line of activity, say mimicry or mechanical contrivance. And it is not to be assumed that at this early stage the child takes up this or that particular employment because it consciously seeks the greatest pleasure it knows of, for there may be an inherited bent to act in this particular way quite apart from the special enjoyment which the activity brings. In this way the career of an artist, for example, may to some

extent be pre-determined independently of the individual's reflection and choice.

Still more plainly does this limitation of the individual's choice with respect to the form of his life-happiness meet us in the influence of early habits. When action has once continued to flow in certain channels there is begotten a new force which directly narrows the field of volition and choice. In the first years of thoughtless impulse the foundations of fixed habit may be laid, and in this case the will's subsequent selection of the conditions of happiness is plainly circumscribed. Such fixed lines of action may, of course, run parallel to later aims; on the other hand, they may diverge from these, and thus habit may prove a distinctly conflicting force in relation to volition.

Among the limits thus early imposed on a reflective pursuit of happiness, one class deserves to be specially mentioned. I refer to the effects of moral discipline. Through the employment of punishment as well as material rewards the child's action is artificially led, so to speak, into a path which otherwise it would not follow. In this way he will acquire the practice not only of limiting his own desires in obedience to the just claims of others, but also of pursuing virtuous and commendable lines of conduct. The force of habit now steps in and fixes action in these channels. And thus the youth who reaches the reflective stage, and begins to survey the unexplored field of life in order to choose his path, finds himself with definite emotional impulses as well as definite ingrained active habits which tie him down, so to speak, to a certain area of right and benevolent conduct.

This hasty glance at the effects of an early fixation of action in definite directions will suffice, I think, to show that, though they may tend to narrow the range of one's happi-

ness, they can hardly amount in most cases to a serious disturbing influence. There may, no doubt, be a strong inherited bent to injurious or vicious conduct, and an untended childhood is only too apt to develop the seeds of such fatal habits. Provided, however, the child is rightly watched and trained, the risks of a permanent loss of happiness are not very great. When the habits thus formed are not of this pernicious character, but simply spring from impulses which are capable of being developed into permanent life-actions, as in the case of the precocious artist or mechanician, they hardly affect happiness at all, since the early development of these actions pretty clearly points to the fact that the individual will realise one chief part of his happiness in this particular direction.

Finally, the effects of early moral discipline may to some extent—that is, so far as they predispose us to self-denying effort—interfere with the greatest amount of individual enjoyment. It is manifest, indeed, that so far as the youth has strongly marked sympathetic impulses—whether naturally or as the result of external influences—he will be exposed to frequent curtailments of his personal happiness. For though participation in others' pleasures is grateful, and though the pleasure of relieving another's want *may* in certain cases more than compensate for the momentary pain in witnessing this want, yet the harder and nobler exertions for the alleviation of others' sufferings cannot be supposed to bring their own adequate reward to the individual. The man would clearly be the gainer if he did not sympathise in these cases, or if his sympathy were of that feeble kind which is got rid of by a voluntary diversion of attention from the painful object. But, unhappily *for himself*, the man of deep and powerful sympathies cannot thus repress

his better impulses, and so sympathy becomes a distinctly opposing force in relation to the processes of volition properly so called—that is to say, the selection of the greatest amount of personal gratification.[1]

It is obvious, however, that in this case there is a clear gain to others, if not to the individual himself, so that the happiness of society as a whole is increased. And this consideration may suffice for our present purposes, since we are concerned not with the happiness of any particular person but of men and women generally.[2]

But though the limitation of the will by inherited or early acquired habits of feeling and action does not seriously endanger one's chances of happiness, it may perhaps be said that a real obstacle to the attainment of this end is presented in the fact of the determinate nature of volition itself. If all volition follows certain definite antecedents, then it would seem that happiness can only be realised where the conditions of willing it are present. This is perfectly true, but what does it amount to? Simply to this, that a man will not seek after a rational form of happiness till he is able to represent it to himself, and till he feels its desirability. Where knowledge and the emotional susceptibility which helps to determine this knowledge are wanting, there can, of course, be no aspiration towards a

[1] This side of disinterested feeling has been well illustrated by Mr. Bain.

[2] This pre-determination of action in certain lines by external circumstances appears less of an evil when we reflect that the situation of the person who has many paths from which he may choose, is attended with its characteristic drawback. We are all familiar with the fact that a person may easily have too rich a field of selection, that a many-sided nature may find itself determined to a state of equilibrium and inaction rather than of action through the rapid alternating play of its various impulses. The direction of the stream of action into a definite channel

given end. If, on the other hand, the idea of happiness is fitted to recommend itself as soon as the requisite susceptibility and mental power are possessed, we surely have all that we can reasonably look for. The doctrine of determination simply says that men will not aim at a thing till they feel the appropriate motives—in other words, till they begin to wish to possess it. It puts not the slightest obstacle in the way of anybody who has the requisite wish.[1]

So far, indeed, from this doctrine being antagonistic to the attainment of happiness, it distinctly favours it by showing us how we are to get others to aim at it. If there were no definite relation between action and motive, I do not see how we could ever be sure of rousing men to a wise endeavour after happiness. But since there is such a relation, we know that all we have to do is to develop in the particular persons the necessary sensibility and to instruct them as to the surest means of reaching the desired end.

by external pressure may be a positive good when it delivers a man from the pains of indecision and of thwarted impulse. Daniel Deronda in his early stage of vague and diffused aspiration is less happy than Daniel Deronda determined to an absorbing national enterprise under the combined influences of newly-discovered racial affinity, friendship, and love. It is by no means one of the least advantages of a moral control of life that it provides us with a fixed and irreversible scheme of action, delivering us within a wide region of conscious life from the evil and loss of such an unenviable position as that just described. Of course this advantage is greater in the case of a sluggish and flaccid, than in that of a brisk, energetic will. Yet it amounts to something even in the latter instance.

[1] It may indeed be said that since one determining antecedent of volition is active energy, the absence of this may sometimes render effort after happiness impossible, even when the end presented is appreciated and wished for. To this extent, then, the doctrine of the determined character of volition may have a depressing effect. This condition, active energy, is clearly involved in the disciplined will to be spoken of immediately.

But though the doctrine of the determination of the will does not tell against the possibility of happiness, it cannot too often be repeated that a disciplined will is one of its first conditions. This has already been implied in the foregoing sketch of happiness. It may be well to reiterate that the greatest foe to happiness, greater probably than an unhappy temperament, is the want of the higher volitional power of self-restraint. Men make themselves miserable, as the pessimist so often tells us, by vain desire; and it is, as I have remarked, the highest function of a disciplined will to restrain desire. The natural folly of people in desiring what a moment's reflection would show to be unattainable might, perhaps, be illustrated in the clamour of English concert-goers for an encore after having just enjoyed some delicious piece of music. What they want, and foolishly imagine they can obtain, is a renewal of the enjoyment which attended the first hearing of the piece. In point of fact, however, the second hearing (when it immediately follows the first), commonly brings a greatly reduced enjoyment, and thus the perfect impression of the first hearing is dulled, if not obliterated. As in this smaller matter, so in larger matters, men miss real enjoyment by failing to recognise and to repress futile wishes.

But again, it may be said, is there not something in the fact of limited human powers which makes the reality at least doubtful? This brings us to the question how far individual human endeavour actually succeeds in moulding and re-casting the chief factors of life, as supposed in the last chapter, or, to express it otherwise, what limits are imposed by the fixed constitution of the world on man's active aspirations after this higher happiness.

Leaving for the moment the inquiry to what extent

circumstances which at present seem to be fixed conditions of life may prove at some future day to be modifiable by human endeavour, one may concede that there are definite and constant limits to our activity. The constitution and laws of the physical world, the innate structure and tendencies of our organisms, the sequences of the seasons, the variations of climate, the exposure to disease and death, the relations and obligations involved in our birth, the fixed laws of human nature as manifested in the structure of society—these may be instanced among such seemingly permanent conditions.

So far as these are constant and unmodifiable, there arise two questions respecting their bearing on happiness: (*a*) What is their net value in relation to the possibilities of happiness? (*b*) How far do the evils which appear to be inseparable from these conditions militate against our scheme of happiness?

With respect to the hedonistic worth of the fixed circumstances of our environment it would clearly be foolish to attempt to reach an exact result. It is, no doubt, easier to measure the value of a group of external circumstances in relation to a definite idea like that of happiness, than in relation to an indefinite number of susceptibilities to pleasure and pain. Yet the former problem is sufficiently difficult, and I cannot attempt to discuss the point fully here. For one thing, it may be said that we know too little of the relation of much in our environment to our weal and woe. To give but one example, the influence of varying meteorological conditions on our mental tone, especially in this changeful climate of ours, is as yet very largely an unknown quantity.

The only way to arrive at an approximate conclusion respecting the worth of fixed external circumstances would

be by surveying large groups of these factors with a view to balance as far as possible their favourable and unfavourable aspects. In this way a rough estimate of some departments of our environment might, perhaps, be arrived at. One might, for example, with reason, conclude that the direct mental effect of one's natural surroundings—including its value as scenery for the eye, as a stimulus to the imagination, also as a profound influence on our varying moods—is a positive remainder of enjoyment. At least, this would appear to be so under moderately favourable climatic conditions, and in the case of a man highly sensitive to all the varying charm of nature, of one capable of drawing intellectual and emotional refreshment and a certain kind of pensive enjoyment from the darker and gloomier scenery of earth and sky, as well as of finding a glad delight in the endless play of light and colour and the continuous flow of suggestive sound which make up the fairer side of nature.

One consideration should be borne in mind in seeking to arrive at any such estimate of our dwelling-place. It does not follow that because a given department of these fixed conditions does more to call forth resistive effort than to inspire gladness, its value is simply a negative one. For if the opposing forces are not too formidable, but merely rouse the mind to a moderate endeavour, this very excitation of the energies of self-protection may, according to the view of activity already expounded, be a balance of pleasure. If, for example, the elements of storm and cold which beset a pedestrian are not too fierce, the putting forth of energy in self-defensive action may become positively joyous, being enriched with a glad sense of power and with a vivid foretaste of subsequent comfort and repose. So, too, the hardy bodily discipline to which a man inures himself, in

order to avoid the insidious attacks of disease, may become a pleasurable exercise. Thus the very existence of an evil to be averted sometimes serves as a starting-point for a positive enjoyment. It is to be remembered, too, as has already been remarked, that when these adverse conditions are not themselves removable we are free to select for habitual contemplation those aspects which are fitted to inspire and sustain us, while abstracting as far as possible from the more depressing or vexatious elements. And thus, where escape from the liability to an evil is out of the question, we may at least diminish its force by giving it as little place as possible in our thoughts.

Such considerations would seem to favour the conclusion that, given certain conditions of mental culture, including the capability of a wise regulation of the higher voluntary action, the aggregate of fixed external circumstances makes in itself, to some extent, for our happiness.

Yet this conclusion may safely be dispensed with, without any fear of stumbling into the slough of pessimism. What if keen blasts more frequently blow in upon us than soft refreshing gales from these peripheral limiting regions of our existence, provided that within the inner region of our own creation there glows a larger central warmth? If our scheme of happiness is itself realisable, if we are really able to build up our own inner world of fair possession and glad opportunity, it must surely matter but little whether this outer area which our will cannot touch must be pronounced on the whole a slight excess of evil or of good.

What we have to ask, then, is, whether this happiness is realised as a matter of fact, and if so, in what measure it is realised.

First of all, then, one may safely maintain that the idea

of happiness unfolded above is, as a matter of individual experience and observation, actually realised by a certain proportion of mankind in various degrees of completeness and excellence.

Let us hear individual testimony. The pessimist says men invariably, on looking back on their life, think it empty and worthless, and they point to the many testimonies to the fact that men would not willingly lead their lives over again. It is, perhaps, worth remarking that men's shrinking from a *repetition* of life is no proof of its worthlessness. In imagining oneself as leading life over again one cannot but conceive it as robbed of its freshness and novelty. Also, one involuntarily conceives oneself as knowing beforehand the course of life's events, and so lacking the zest which uncertainty gives to active effort.

However this be, it is simply untrue that men invariably think ill of life at parting from it. The voice of mature reflection far oftener breathes the note of a quiet and moderate contentment. Cicero's picture of old age, with its memory of a life well spent and its many returning echoes of rational joys,[1] appears, to say the least, to be just as truthful as that of the man who leaves life in disgust and petulant ill-will. Many men who had seemed to repine at the varying phases of their lot were able in this last quiet retrospect to assure themselves that their life was after all good and worth possessing. Nor does this judgment spring from an instinctive clinging to life; since it shows itself most distinctly in those who are quite ready to give back the often-slighted gift. It is, indeed, the very sense of having had one's share of the world's good, of having realised a

[1] 'Nec me vixisse pœnitet, quoniam ita vixi ut frustra me natum non existimem.'—Words ascribed to Cato, in the 'De Senectute.'

moderate degree of happiness, which helps to compose a man's mind when called upon to take farewell of his earthly habitation.

But what, it may be asked, is this final utterance of a man's judgment on his life really worth? Is he not likely to be biassed by a wish to think well of what is fast slipping from his grasp? And further, is it possible for anyone so to bring under review all the leading events and circumstances of his life as to arrive at a trustworthy opinion on the question?

With respect to the existence of a bias in the case it may be allowed that, when reviewing one's past life in the fulness of old age, one is naturally disposed to take a favourable view. Yet, on the other hand, there seems to be a set-off against this circumstance in the fact that it is only when the prospect of life's loss becomes vivid that we learn to appreciate many elements of its beauty and worth. In any case, such quiet retrospect should, one supposes, be freer from the influence of disturbing emotional leanings than any estimate formed under the varying pressures of life-action itself; and one may safely say that this mature and calm reflection is free from many disturbing influences which sway our judgment, now too far in the positive direction and now too far in the negative. Of these influences I shall have to speak by and by. For the present it is enough to say that a survey of one's past life in contemplative old age is much less likely to be inexact than any single estimate formed amid the shifting surroundings and suggestions of active life.

As to the second difficulty, that of arriving at an approximately complete and fairly accurate summary of life's main features, I think the reader will agree with me that this is not a very formidable one. Although it is impossible

to make even a rough calculation of the single experiences of pleasure and pain of which our life consists, it is not impossible to gather up into a single comprehensive view as many of the leading circumstances and protracted experiences of life as may suffice for an approximate estimate of its value. Such calculation is what all of us have to do when thinking of entering on a new sphere of activity, and what most of us are disposed to do when taking leave of any such sphere; and such judgments are taken as sufficiently exact.

If, then, any number of intelligent and trustworthy persons agree, on a retrospective survey of life, that it has been on the whole more joyous than sad, I think this consensus of opinion must be regarded as an important piece of evidence in favour of the proposition that happiness in some appreciable measure is a reality.

But we should by no means confine ourselves to these final estimates. If, on the one side, they are free from the deflecting causes which operate during the agitation of active life, they are apt to be unsatisfactory through the failings of memory, and the distorting effect which the selective function of memory is apt to produce. It may be, as some assert, that the mind more readily retains its pleasures than its pains, or *vice versâ*, though I think this fact has never been satisfactorily established. What seems to be the truth of the matter is that men, according to their temperament, are disposed to dwell rather on one side of their past life than on the other; and, as we have seen, a wise direction of the processes of internal reflection leads to a selection of the happier scenes and events of the past. In this way it probably happens that the later recollections of life, which owe so much to long habits of retrospection, do not accu-

rately represent the average character of our experience. These valedictory utterances must therefore be confirmed by the judgments of men and women in the midst of life's interests. The question now takes this form: Is the average and dominant judgment of any number of thoughtful and competent persons concerning the worth of life a favourable one?

I assume here, what I hope to show by and by, that there are influences biassing men both in the pessimistic and in the optimistic direction. Sometimes this bias seems to be rooted and fixed in the temperament. In this case it colours the average and prevailing view. In the more common case, however, the predisposition is a changing influence, varying with the person's temporary mood and physical circumstances. In these instances its disturbing effect may, to some extent, be eliminated. A man feels he is prone at one time to take too golden a view of life, at another time as foolishly to underrate it. Midway between these extremes he is aware of a kind of judgment to which his mind gravitates, on the whole, in its calmest moments, when it is able to step back, so to speak, and survey the adjacent field of experience with something of objective disinterestedness. Now I maintain that this prevailing opinion is in a large number of cases most unmistakably a favourable one.[1] The present writer is fully convinced that it is so in his own case, though he is aware of being foolishly acted on by both kinds of disturbing influence. Many of his most truth-

[1] One may assert this without going with the extreme optimists, as for example, Hartley, who writes: 'It is the general opinion of mankind that beauty, order, pleasure, happiness, exceed disorder, pain; and this is some kind of proof of the Thing itself' ('Observations on Man,' part ii. prop. 4).

loving and discerning friends assure him that the same is true of themselves.

The pessimist will, no doubt, object that in this judgment we do not get rid of the constant personal factor of temperament. A natural wish to think life good still colours the man's judgment even in his calmest moments.

To this I would reply, it is a pure assumption that the thoughtful men who thus agree in approving life do share in an optimistic bias. One may, on the contrary, assert that among those who thus give a favourable verdict in their calmest moments are persons who are naturally prone to dejection of mind. What we must seek to obtain is the largest number of testimonies from persons of the most discriminating minds and sober judgments, and in this case any slight error from temperament may be trusted to correct itself.

A further reply to this objection may be found in the fact that temperament, even if it biases the judgment, affects the quality of the experience itself, so that the error is not so large as it at first appears. On this point I shall have to dwell more fully by and by.

One statement of the pessimist, respecting the natural proclivity of the mind to error in judging of the value of life, must be referred to here. We all cling instinctively to life. This, says Schopenhauer and Hartmann, makes us think more highly of it than we should otherwise do as rational beings. I admit the instinctive clinging to life, but I deny that it invariably exerts the influence here attributed to it.

The instinct for life I conceive to be a kind of reflex shrinking from all destructive circumstances, situations, and actions, whether actually presented to view, or merely sug-

gested in idea. It is this instinct which, in part at least, makes men recoil from self-murder.

Now, this instinct may be unimpaired, and yet the view of life be utterly condemnatory. Many a miserable man, probably, is certain that his life is wholly worthless, and yet fears to destroy it. It seems clear that the instinct exerts no appreciable effect on the judgment in this case.

Let us now take another case. Cicero's Cato approves of life (of a certain kind), yet the instinct of living has ceased in him to exert any discoverable influence. He no longer clings to life, nor does he shrink from a separation from it.

Here we have an utterly unfavourable view of life when the instinct is unimpaired, and a quite complacent view when the instinct is at its minimum, amid the infirmities of old age. To talk, then, as the pessimist does, of the instinct for life universally colouring our view of it, is surely to make a gratuitous assumption, and one which is opposed to facts. That the instinct may become the starting-point for a new belief in life's possibilities of good, I do not deny. But neither internal reflection nor external observation is able to tell me that this instinct habitually enters into our consciousness when we think of life's value.[1]

It seems to me, then, that the agreement of any number of judgments of thoughtful persons, supplemented by those of people who in old age pronounce existence blessed,

[1] In one sense, the instinct of life does undoubtedly colour our view of the object, namely, as a consciousness of life and energy. With every increase in the degree of vital energy, our estimate of life's possibilities grows more favourable. In proportion to the number and force of our conscious impulses, and to the quantity of our active energies, our view of life rises. But here we come to a variable element of temperament, and, moreover, to an influence which affects not only the judgment, but also the quality of the thing judged.

constitutes, in spite of all liabilities to variable error, a quite sufficient basis of testimony to the fact that life is sometimes and to some extent a positive good.

Nor is this all. Though I attach by far the greatest importance to such personal testimony, I think its utterances are to some extent to be confirmed by an accurate observation of those who thus profess to realise a certain measure of happiness. Allowing for all the hidden springs of joy and misery, one may, in the case of many of one's friends and acquaintances, know enough of the dominant circumstances, activities, and aims of life, to say that they constitute on the whole an appreciable degree of happiness. When all the worst evils of life, such as sickness, bereavement, &c., are averted—when the conditions of large schemes of agreeable activity are present, when the person concerned manifests an habitual pleasurable interest in the events of the world which immediately surrounds him, and when the whole key of life is that of quiet unfaltering devotion to large, inspiring, and yet rational ends, we may be said to have a fairly unambiguous presentation of human happiness. In truth, so confident do we feel, when observing such a type of existence, that we take upon ourselves to assure the person that he is and must be happy at moments when, through some temporary depressing influence, he is disposed to doubt the fact.

If, then, our arguments are valid, being as conclusive as any reasonings on such an essentially vague theme can hope to be, we have the fact that happiness has been and is now being realised. By this fact alone the fundamental idea of modern pessimism is amply refuted. If happiness is not only conceivable but by some actually realised, there must surely be an end once and for ever of the rather wearisome

denunciations of life *in toto* with which the pessimists are wont to treat us.

As yet, however, nothing has been ascertained as to the quality or degree of the happiness thus reached, or as to the number of persons who can be regarded, with a certain probability, as on the whole in possession of some amount of happiness.

I am quite ready to admit that the quality of the happiness reached by most of those who are undoubtedly worthy to be called in a sense happy is anything but high if measured by an ideal standard—that is to say, by what one conceives a perfectly wise man in the existing state of our knowledge would choose to adopt as his type of a happy life-experience.

Again I am ready to admit that there are many persons who cannot, by any stretch of probability, be pronounced happy. The facts of suicide would, I take it, sufficiently prove this; for it is much the same thing whether this voluntary surrender of life is carried out with perfectly rational intention, or results from a temporary unsoundness of mind which itself is brought on by unrelieved grief and despair. But, apart from this, the testimony of those we know and can observe amply proves to us that unhappiness is as much a reality as happiness. We have all, probably, met with people who habitually complain that life is a burden to them, that they are a prey to ennui, that painful struggle with want and difficulty exhausts them without bringing any positive gratification. All this is too familiar to need illustration; nor is this testimony to the misery of life confined to one grade of society. The poor are said to be the grumblers *par excellence*. Yet many who are well nourished by the external goods of life

fail to realise those conditions on which we have seen all real happiness to depend. Sometimes it is a gloomy temperament which seems to incapacitate one for accepting any of the cheering gifts of life. Oftener it is a weakness of active impulse and of will which shuts the person out from all those fields of interesting occupation which are the sole guarantee of an enduring happiness.

I am not presumptuous enough to seek to determine (after the manner of some of the last-century optimists), however roughly, the proportion of the happy and the unhappy in the past or the existing world. It is doubtful, indeed, whether the most careful statistics, based on individual testimony, could ever help us here. It must at least be granted that there seems to be an appalling number of unhappy men and women.

There are obvious conditions which must be satisfied before any thought of happiness can arise. A man tied to a bed of sickness, and the prey of severe bodily anguish, cannot hope for much more than his intermittent hours of alleviation and repose. Yet to fix the exact point at which happiness begins to be possible is not easy. It has been said that confirmed invalids, whose sickness was not too painful and who were able to sustain a lively interest in the personal and even the larger public interests about them, have declared themselves to be in possession of a quiet happiness.[1] And one does not see why this purely ideal and sympathetic participation in engaging and cheering activities should not bring an appreciable quantum of positive satisfaction.

Besides freedom from pain, which is the most obvious

[1] Of course, abstraction is here made from the influence of religious belief.

negative pre-condition of a pursuit of happiness, other conditions, negative and positive, of this pursuit often fail to be realised. Of these some of the most important are the following: knowledge of the nature and unfailing sources of happiness; a degree of cultivation which opens up a sufficient area of various pleasurable experience; freedom from want and from the absorbing toils which are needed for the averting of physical evils. All these conditions must be satisfied to some extent before happiness is possible. It is obvious, for example, that in the case of the children of a poor man, barely able to support his family, there cannot arise the question of choosing an appropriate line of pleasurable life-activity. They have to take to certain employments whether they like them or not, and they are fortunate if they have any time and energy to spare for pursuits which their own tastes and volitions, and not necessity, determine for them.

Yet we must be careful not to place the minimum of these conditions too high. A rough street Arab may be very ignorant of the wise man's view of happiness, and thoroughly disqualified for the wide and various enjoyments of a scholarly and artistic mind; moreover, he has not, probably, chosen his line of life as one peculiarly well fitted to bring him happiness. Yet he will know, perhaps, in his own rough fashion, how to hew out interests for himself amid the multitudinous events of his busy world. And many a ragged urchin who is forced to turn his hand to all kinds of rough street-work in order to earn his night's supper, probably manages, by dint of some happy instinct, to find a certain amount of pleasurable interest in his field of toil.[1]

[1] It seems to me that we are liable to err when interpreting the mental condition of those far below us in the scale of culture, by ascribing

Next to these conditions, which one must suppose to exist before any thought of a rational plan of happiness can arise, it is necessary to take into account the many circumstances and influences which serve to frustrate men's endeavours after happiness, even when it is wisely conceived. I refer here not to obstacles which one may be expected to foresee, and would be got rid of by a more intelligent conception of the conditions of happiness—not to disappointments which are due to rash and absurd views of the possibilities of life—but to those of its contingencies against which we cannot as yet hope to provide.

As illustrations of these so-called accidental hindrances, one may select the risk of failing health, not only of ourselves, but also of the relations and friends who constitute so powerful a factor in the determining circumstances of our happiness; the unpredictable changes in the social and industrial regions, which often serve to defeat one's most carefully planned scheme of life-work; the possibilities of unsuspected infidelity on the part of friends or business relations, and so on. One must admit that, in these unpredictable contingencies of life, there is much that militates against our pursuit of happiness.

Yet the effect of these 'accidents' of our existence, if such we are to regard them because of our limited knowledge, must not be estimated too highly. Those that are really unforeseeable are, after all, exceptional phenomena, and

to them our own sensibilities and standards of taste. We think that a daily occupation which would be drearily monotonous to ourselves, with our experience and knowledge, must be equally so to those actually engaged in it. There is, however, clearly a tendency in the case of many to an exactly opposite error. The supposition that the poor are insensible to the deeper human experiences, is an outcome and index of an essentially vulgar mind.

can hardly be said to affect the general probability of happiness, provided the utmost care is taken to guard against all discoverable risks. Nor is this all; the persons who suffer from such accidents do not invariably on that account forfeit their chance of happiness. Men of firm and indomitable will have been known to meet such unavertible shocks, and yet not succumb. Many, too, who, under the first blow of a cruel disappointment, seem plunged in an incurable despair have been known afterwards to rally, and to attain a real if a somewhat chastened form of life-satisfaction. For even though the misfortune proves decisive as to the realisation of happiness in a particular way—for example, in social position or in a congenial marriage relation—it has been found possible to fill up the remainder of life with other aims and other modes of pleasurable activity.

I have purposely reserved to the close one set of influences which appear to fall just as well under the circumstances frustrative of happiness as under the pre-conditions of any endeavour after this object. I refer to what is familiarly known as 'the unhappy temperament.' I think it must be conceded that there are persons whose organism and natural disposition of mind are decided obstacles to the realisation of happiness. Of the nature of this unfavourable cast of mind I shall have to speak by and by. At present it is sufficient to note the fact that many people are so constituted as not to be able to take kindly to the facts of life. They are unduly sensitive and irritable, appearing to feel pain much more acutely than pleasure; also they are gloomy, and disposed to dwell on the risks and disappointments of life rather than on its possibilities of good. Where there is this despondent temper it is hard to stimulate the spirit to any apprehension of happiness as a cheering possi-

bility; and even if the endeavour is made to realise the possibility, the peculiar sensibility to all kinds of painful impressions acts as a serious hindrance to the fruition of the object.

To determine how far these peculiarities of temperament do really prevent the attainment of happiness is no easy task. It has been said with some plausibility that happiness is much more a matter of temperament than of volition and endeavour. Yet the importance of this factor may easily be overrated. A naturally melancholy disposition is not incompatible with an energetic will, and, as a matter of fact, men who have become aware of this unfavourable influence of their innate disposition have managed, by dint of careful self-discipline and a high tension of will, to achieve the subjugation of their hidden foe and the realisation of a quiet cheerfulness and satisfaction in life.[1] It is not, then, every degree of the melancholic temperament which hinders the attainment of happiness, but only the more virulent degrees which appear to amount to a distinctly pathological phenomenon.

This, then, seems to be all that can safely be said with respect to the actual existence of happiness, as a fact both of internal and of external observation. Our conclusion is in no sense an optimist one. It is not even affirmed that happiness is more frequently found than missed; though I think there is much to be said for this proposition, provided happiness be taken in its widest sense, as covering every form of satisfaction which gives to life a bare positive value.

[1] A recent illustration of such a noble and fairly successful attempt to overcome an organic tendency to depression may be found in the gifted German, Rahel von Varnhagen. See the work of Mrs. Vaughan Jennings, 'Rahel, her life and letters.'

The difficulty in arriving at even an approximately correct view arises partly from the want of a trustworthy collection of a sufficient number of typical personal testimonies as to the felt worth of human life, partly from our ignorance of the extent to which the hindrances to happiness actually operate.

And here we naturally arrive at another stage in our inquiry. In our rough classification of the extra-human agencies which may be conceived as limiting our practical scheme of happiness, certain circumstances were marked off as seemingly fixed conditions of life, constant for all men or large masses of mankind at all times. Such are the general facts in the structure of the physical world, the comparatively fixed laws of the human organism, the regularly recurring influences of climate, &c. We found that the aggregate value of these in relation to our weal and woe is not exactly determinable, though testimony assures us that even if they amount to a balance of evil, this may be more than compensated by the positive gains of an active pursuit of happiness. On the other hand, we have dwelt on a large number of other and variable facts which clearly appear to tell against the probability of happiness. These include, first of all, those circumstances which limit the pursuit of happiness and make it, as it were, the luxury of a favoured minority, such as human ignorance, absence of mental culture, the pressure of material want, and so on. Secondly, they include those circumstances and influences which operate as frustrating forces in relation to our pursuit of happiness, such as the unforeseeable contingencies of business pursuits, the disappointments arising from others' wrong-doing, and, lastly, the inborn and inalienable stamp of individual temperament.

So far nothing has been said as to the permanence of these variable conditions. Our task was simply to note their existence and to group them under one or two rough heads. Now, however, we have reached the point at which this inquiry becomes necessary. We have done all that seems possible, in the present state of our knowledge, to read the average value of human life as it has hitherto existed. It is now time to ask how far this value is a fixed quantity for all times. In order to answer this we shall have to look again at the impediments which we have seen to stand in the way of happiness with a view to discover whether they are in their nature permanently unmodifiable by collective human effort.

This new point of view gives quite another form to our question. We have to deal no longer with Hartmann's first stage of the optimist's illusion, that happiness is already attained, but with what he calls its third stage, namely that happiness will some day be realised. It is obvious that a man may have very gloomy views respecting the hitherto condition of human life, and yet be sanguine as to its future character. Optimism with respect to the future is a very different thing from optimism with respect to the present and past. We have now to inquire how far this attitude of mind is a rational one.

CHAPTER XIII.

HAPPINESS AND PROGRESS.

THE most interesting question in relation to our subject is undoubtedly that of the worth of progress. It is here that the conflict between the despairing and the hopeful view of life becomes most intense. Both parties in the dispute are dimly aware that our final judgment respecting the worth of the world must be decided on this issue. For even if the pessimists succeed in showing that the world, as it has hitherto existed, is an appalling excess of misery, there remains the question whether this balance is a fixed quantity, or whether it may be indefinitely reduced, and even transformed into a positive remainder of good.

It is seen, too, more or less distinctly, that this question of progress, however complex it may at first sight appear, is a much more definite and tractable problem than that of the relative amounts of happiness and misery coexisting now or at any past period in the world's history. Not only so, it is recognised, by one side at least, that the former inquiry is to a large extent rendered unnecessary through the introduction of the latter question. If, the opponent of pessimism reasons, progress makes for an increase of happiness, it matters but little what are the exact proportions of joy or sorrow in the world at this fleeting point of time. Provided only happiness be shown to be possible under certain conditions, the demonstration that the onward move-

ment of things tends, however slowly, to the fuller realisation of these conditions suffices to redeem the world as a whole from the damning charge of the pessimist. Finally, the present concentration of scientific thought on the dynamical aspects of the universe, on the development of its various products, on the origin and tendencies of life, and on the development of the human race, serves to invest the problem of progress with a peculiar interest for the present generation.

In considering the value of human progress, the first desideratum is a scientific conception of the nature and chief factors of this complex movement. We have seen how utterly Hartmann fails to appreciate human advance by not setting out with some such scientific idea. Modern science enables us to some extent to construct such a scheme. It furnishes us with a conception of the essential characters of the onward current of human events sufficiently definite and complete to enable us to arrive at a fairly certain conclusion respecting its aggregate value.

For the present we will look away from what the new science of organic development tells us about the phenomenon, and will confine ourselves to what seems to be the result of inductive historical research. These investigations tell us little, if anything, respecting any change in native capacity. They conceive progress, mainly if not exclusively, as a change in influences which are external to the individual, residing in the social medium into which he is born, whether in its industrial, moral, intellectual, æsthetic, or some other department. That this medium does, under certain conditions, change according to a discoverable plan, is one of the most certain conclusions of historical science.

Its mode of change constitutes what is meant by progress. With reference to the conditions which ultimately determine these changes, and the extent to which they have operated in affecting the aggregate condition of the race, something will be said by and by. Here it is enough to know that such progress has been realised by a certain portion of mankind.

I do not purpose here going very fully into the question of the various constituents of progress and their exact proportions. The reader may find these well expounded in the best historical literature of our age. While much is uncertain, there is sufficient agreement with respect to some of the main features of the subject.

Thus it is accepted as indisputable that one of the most fundamental elements of progress is increase of knowledge. The contrast between the wild fancies of the savage mind in presence of the impressive phenomena of nature, and the most advanced modern scientific conceptions of the physical world, may serve as a measure of the change which intellectual progress has already achieved. The gradual accumulation and transmission of knowledge respecting physical nature and human character, and of the various agencies by which the scope of human action may be enlarged, may be said in a sense to underlie all other modes of progress.

As a direct consequence of this factor we have a growing dominion over the forces of nature, those which menace our safety and comfort, as well as those which contribute to our enjoyment. The step already taken from the blank helplessness of the primitive man before the evils of storm, flood, and disease, to the command of these evils implied in modern agricultural and sanitary science, illustrates

this side of progress. All practical science, as seen in the various useful arts, and in the processes of industry as a whole, clearly advances directly as human intelligence in its totality advances.

The second great factor in human progress consists of emotional changes. The ruling sentiments, the cherished forms of imagination, the great action-prompting motives of a people, tend to vary in a certain manner, and this change constitutes one of the leading features of social progress as a whole. There has been a wide transition from the wild fancies which gratify the savage mind, as his few elementary passions, his childlike wonder and pitiable terror, and his limited selfish impulses, to the imaginations which are quickened into life by new scientific discoveries, the emotions born of modern conceptions of nature, the love of beauty which dwells in the artist-mind, and finally the moral sentiments of sympathy and benevolence which bind the civilised men of to-day in common bonds.

Again, any given state of society acts as a training influence for the individual will. Not only does our social medium provide us with a store of knowledge, and a set of emotional influences, the acceptance of which hardly involves our volition; it brings to bear a number of forces which act directly on our voluntary actions. As members of society we are trained and disciplined by a number of such forces which answer to the modes of education, the pressure of family or public sentiment, the restraints of the law, and so on.

Now these controlling and directing influences vary in a progressive society no less than the others, and their changes form another important factor of this progress. In a primitive age the individual is educated only to per-

form a few simple actions, involving no great prevision or protracted concentration. The motives, too, which are brought into play are few in number, and of a low moral order. Again, the discipline enforced by ruling sentiment and law is exceedingly limited. Custom or public opinion is satisfied if only a few of the worst crimes are avoided, and a few of the rudest virtues, such as bodily courage, are exhibited. In contrast to this, the discipline of a highly civilised society is exceedingly far-reaching, penetrating, and comprehensive. The influences of education, of the prevailing moral sentiment, and of law, train the individual will to a self-control which is at once intensive and extensive, strong in its degree and ample in its range. It serves to develop and exercise all the complex impulses which enter into moral action—such as the motives of a far-seeing prudence, of a refined pride or sense of dignity, the love of approval, the several family affections, public spirit, a large-hearted sympathy, and the desire to benefit one's country and one's race.

Progress, then, implies an advance in those social influences which serve to develop the individual intelligence, emotions, and will. It is continually substituting a higher for a lower kind of influence, supplying the external conditions of a larger, more varied, and more refined type of knowledge, sentiment, and action.[1]

Now, so far as it does this, it clearly tends to deepen and to heighten the individual's capacity for happiness. The vast increase in the number of emotional susceptibilities which marks off the civilised and cultured man from

[1] This result is distinctly implied in Mr. Herbert Spencer's definition of development as a whole, including both that of the individual and that of the community or the race.

the savage involves a proportionate increase in the amount of material out of which happiness is built up. Let the reader compare the numerous subtle shades of feeling which natural scenery awakens in the mind of a cultivated modern with the few crude emotions excited in the primitive mind, and he will be able to appreciate this tendency of mental development.

It is, no doubt, easy to urge that there are certain drawbacks to this side of progress. Emotional development, it may be said, not only means a large increase of new capacity for pleasure, it necessarily involves a refinement, and consequently an attenuation, of feeling. The enjoyments of the boor, if few, are far more intense than those of the polished man. Civilisation tends to reduce all emotion to one dull level.

Such reasoning appears to me to be a good deal forced. It is a perfectly open question whether the crude enjoyments of a savage are more intense than many of the peculiar delights of civilisation—say those of music. There seems often to lurk in this argument a fallacious analogy between the pleasures of a primitive mind and those of a child. Because children's first novel impressions of the world are so intense, it is supposed that those of the rude uncivilised man must be so too. But one fails to see why the impressions of his limited experience should be more novel than those of a civilised man's more varied experience. In truth, novelty is much more an accompaniment of the latter than of the former type of life. But allowing that there are more intense single enjoyments in the former case, it does not require much reflection to see that this loss is far more than made good by that multiplication of pleasurable elements which goes with emotional

growth. Who would exchange a life consisting of many continuous currents of moderate enjoyment for one made up of a few distant points of exciting pleasure, separated by long tracts of emotional torpidity?

That there is a certain emotional loss attending all progress in mental development, I quite concede. In addition to the doubtful diminution of intensity of single enjoyments just spoken of, there is undoubtedly a certain process of decay in emotional as in all other growth. The man of refined feelings has not only added numerous susceptibilities to those of the boor; he has also outgrown or cast off some of his predecessor's modes of sensibility. He cannot, for example, experience the latter's pure delight in witnessing bodily suffering; and this enjoyment, reinforced by sympathy with a few kinsfolk or fellow-tribesmen, appears to be a prime factor of pleasure in the uncivilised man's life. Again, our typical civilised man knows little of that intensity of wonder and awe which the savage experiences in presence of the wholly unexplored universe around him.

Here there is a certain loss, one must admit; but is it worth considering in view of the far larger gain? As to wonder, there is little doubt that the ignorant man feels much more of painful than pleasurable agitation in presence of the phenomena of nature; and even the mythic fancies which his emotions, led only by his few crude perceptions, are able to beget, as often bring anxiety and fear as trust and hope. On the other hand, the ever-widening field of phenomena opened up by science would seem fitted to excite a much more refined and pleasurable, even if less intense, emotion of wonder. Can any thoughtful mind really believe that the whole condition of mind of a savage

when it confronts nature is preferable to that of an educated member of a modern community?

It is not, however, on these drawbacks that the disparager of emotional development is likely to dwell. He will, most probably, call attention to deeper sources of evil. Of these there seem to be two which call for special notice.

First of all, it is said that since our susceptibility to pain necessarily grows with our susceptibility to pleasure, the total result of emotional progress cannot after all be a gain. As a matter of fact one may see that a man of highly cultivated sensibility feels a thousand pangs from which the obtuse mind of a boor is spared. If, it may be asked, through my modern emotional culture I am exposed to just as many annoyances and injuries as I am to enjoyments and satisfactions, in what respect am I better off than my supposed savage ancestor?

In the second place, it may be urged with reason that this growth in capacity for enjoyment involves increase of want, of desire, and so of pain. The cultivated modern mind requires vastly more to satisfy its emotional needs than a rude uncultivated mind. How many refined persons there are in modern society whose tastes fit them for all kinds of enjoyments, social, æsthetic, &c., from which their limited pecuniary means effectually preclude them! Does not mental development, then, simply afflict us with multiplicity of painful longing, unless, which is obviously impossible, it can be shown to include a proportionate increase of sources of gratification?

To both of these objections there is one adequate answer, an answer which the pessimist has skilfully managed to overlook. If emotional development were a process apart and complete in itself, one might doubt, and even deny, its

value. But human progress, as we have seen, implies more than this. The growth of new emotional capacity, the awakening of new responsive sensibility, goes hand in hand with, and cannot be separated from, intellectual and volitional development. The civilised man unspeakably surpasses his untaught ancestor in knowledge of the sources of good and ill. Not only so, he surpasses him in the function of self-control, in the power of regulating his thoughts and desires as well as his actions.

Even admitting, then, that the capacity for suffering increases with that of enjoyment, and that a multiplication of sensibilities brings with it a multiplication of desires, one may still contend that the cultivated mind is far more happily placed than the uncultivated. It is so, first of all, since its increased knowledge enables it so much better to single out from its environment and to appropriate all available sources of enjoyment, and at the same time to recognise and avoid the causes of its suffering. In addition to this, the increase of moral energy, the development of will in its proper sense—which, as we have seen, is one element of human progress—secures in the case of the cultivated man such an amount of new power in the control of desire, and the concentration of thought on the grateful and cheering ingredients of life, as to more than counteract any tendency of emotional progress to produce an increase of desire. The man, with more possibilities alike of pleasure and of pain—provided he has more knowledge of their causes, and greater force of will in the management of his desires—is, one would say, much better off than a man with few materials and little means of managing these.

It is to be added that progress does imply an increase

in the external means of enjoyment, which increase serves very considerably to counteract the influence of multiplying desires. To this side of progress we must now turn.

Hitherto we have examined the movements of progress as effecting a change in the individual's internal capacities of enjoyment; we have now to regard it as bringing about a change in his external circumstances, in those outer conditions of life which serve to determine the number and quality of his pleasures and pains.

These changes may be roughly divided into material and social. Under the former head I understand all transformations of physical surroundings, including all that prolonged and collective human effort does to add to the material possessions of the race. Under the latter are to be grouped all changes which reside in society itself and its relations, in the characters, ideas, and actions of the people who compose our social environment.

In considering the physical results of progress, we may discard any changes brought about by the processes of physical nature, so far as these lie outside the control of human action. That the surface of the earth, both as a whole and in its parts, is slowly undergoing changes which have a decided bearing on the conditions of human life, is certain; and this fact will have to be considered in appreciating the final destiny of mankind. At present, however, we are concerned with a limited process, with human development as it is established on a basis of history, and we may therefore overlook all such changes.

Confining ourselves, then, to the material processes dependent on human action, we may probably take it as an indisputable fact that the movements summed up under the term civilisation involve a vast addition to our means of

securing enjoyment and of averting pain. Nobody, so far as I know, has ever challenged the proposition that the development of the useful as well as of the fine arts has greatly enlarged the sum of valuable human possessions.

Among this increased store of good must be reckoned not only all improvements in natural agents, and all material objects so far as they are divided, re-combined, and transformed by manual skill, but also all objects to which growing knowledge has attached a value, such as those animal and vegetable species which have been found to subserve human want as muscular forces, nourishing substances, or remedial agents. It must be taken, too, as including not only permanently useful objects, but the knowledge and skill which reside in our fellow men, and through which they are able at will to reproduce certain beneficent physical processes. Thus the collective material gain of civilisation must be taken as covering not only the newly discovered metallic wealth of the earth's surface, but also the traditional skill of machinist or surgeon, which constitutes a permanent possibility of a certain valuable physical result. The fruits of practical science in all its branches, the accumulating products of industry, the permanent creations of art, these things go far to make the physical environment of a nineteenth-century Englishman wholly unlike that of one of his primitive ancestors. That these possessions in themselves constitute a large addition to the external conditions of human welfare has never, I think, been seriously questioned.

It seems unnecessary to try to prove further that this gain amounts to a positive quantity. It not only serves to diminish the sources of misery, it provides numerous elements of gratification. Even Hartmann allows this in the case of the fine arts, however hard he tries to minimise

their practical value. The whole scale of modern artificial amusements, from the illustrated scientific lecture to the cheap excursion train, clearly depends on this addition of material utilities. Not only so, the many comforts and luxuries of life which the individual may now purchase, appear to all but the pessimist to constitute a very large addition to the positive sources of human enjoyment. It is needless as it is vain to try to enumerate the many new elements of gratification which advancing civilisation has already brought us. For one thing, this is impossible; their name is legion. In the next place, one might easily fall into the style of a foolish rhetorical optimism. It is enough, perhaps, to say that a mere glance at the fruits of ages of human industry shows one that the added positive good is vast, varied, and incalculable.[1]

Let us now turn to the second great factor in progress considered as a series of changes in the environment of the individual, namely, the processes which modify and transform all social surroundings. If the physical medium of the civilised man differs from that of the uncivilised, still more does his social medium. Under this head must be understood all circumstances and relations which have a distinctly moral character, namely the sentiments and character of a community, its dominant ideas and beliefs, the prevailing tone of moral sentiment, all the existing mental products of social action, whether embodied in literature, or elaborated into laws, political institutions, &c.

[1] An exhaustive account of the effects of social progress on our physical environment would have to include the changes produced in the fauna and flora of the earth's surface. The destruction of dangerous and noxious animals, the extirpation of useless vegetation, as well as the cultivation of grateful and useful vegetable products, and the domestication of serviceable and companionable animals, constitutes an important element in man's alteration of his environment.

It is obvious that this aggregate of social conditions not only acts as a developing discipline for the individual, but also provides some of the most important external conditions of his conscious life. According to the average moral character of the members of a society and their degree of trustworthiness, the nature of its laws, written and unwritten, the amount of its knowledge, the degree of security afforded by law and public opinion, the quality of existing political institutions, together with the number and force of the ideas and sentiments which bind the members of the society in sympathy and co-operation—according to each and all of these circumstances the external possibilities of happiness will vary in an indefinite degree.

Now, it may be safely asserted that what is meant by progress or social development involves a continual increase in these conditions of happiness. All intellectual and moral growth in a society clearly removes many sources of misery and many hindrances to happiness. The substitution of a scientific conception of nature for a superstitious fancy, the repression of all anti-social impulses and the growth of the motives of justice and honour, plainly remove some of the most serious obstacles to the attainment of individual happiness.

But this is not all. The growth of these social conditions involves, further, the addition of numerous positive sources of happiness. For example, improved laws and an increase of social security mean the introduction of definite means through which the individual is enabled to compass the ends of wealth and professional success. More than this, social progress is constantly providing new and larger areas of pleasurable activity for the individual. The growth of

science and art means the addition of new intellectual and æsthetic interests; and political progress, by throwing open the sphere of political action to a larger and larger number of citizens, provides an additional region of agreeable and elevating activity. More especially it is to be noted that the development of mutual confidence and sympathy, which is a distinct element in social progress, renders possible more numerous and larger projects of joint pleasurable action. Whether the object be a beneficent alleviation of others' wants, or the conjoint attainment of certain public advantages, as, for example, an improvement in the art treasures of a country, or the fulfilment of a grateful national duty, such as the erection of a memorial to a great poet, all united action of these kinds supplies a wide field of pleasurable activity, the delight of which is intensified and completed by the element of sympathy.

One need not, however, dwell longer on the benefits arising from the development of social relations and activities. Nobody—not even the pessimist—has, so far as I know, ever consistently denied that this progress involves a certain amount of improvement. The only question raised by penetrating and thoughtful minds is how much this benefit really amounts to, and what drawbacks accompany and limit these advantages. It is only too easy to magnify unduly the benefits of progress; and the cautious, truth-loving mind cannot be satisfied till it knows how much this tendency to improvement is really worth.

I am not concerned here to determine how far men have over-estimated the blessings of progress. It is enough for my present purpose to make out that it is a blessing, however limited as yet, and however slowly secured. Yet it may be well to point to some of the most important draw-

backs of progress, with a view to see whether they actually amount to anything like a neutralising influence.

The drawbacks of progress are either temporary evils or permanent losses. To the first class belong all the painful effects of friction in the social machine. Change in ideas, in customs, in political institutions, always means, for a certain number and for a time, a painful sense of rupture with familiar surroundings, a feeling of strangeness and insecurity, not to speak of the grief which comes from the conviction that a trusted source of joy has proved itself to be illusory. There is no doubt that these evils are real and ought not to be lightly estimated. Yet a wise man is not likely to regard them as making the advantages of progress doubtful. Social change only takes place when the masses are ready for it, and approve of it; so that it is, after all, the minority only who suffer. But this is not all. One may reasonably urge that this evil of change is something which can be greatly reduced by the introduction of a different style of education, intellectual and moral. If men's minds were from the first familiarised with the idea of the constant flux of things, if their horizons were widened, and the partial and limited nature of their religious and other ideas made clear to them, they might be better trained to adapt themselves to the necessities of progress, and even cordially to concur in them.

A more important question is that of the apparently permanent drawbacks of progress considered as a change of the physical and social environment. Among these are to be included both losses of primitive good, and also the addition of positive evils. As an example of loss one may refer to the separation which modern social life effects between man and his natural surroundings. I will not

refer to the material losses involved in our civilised mode of life, such as the wholesome and bracing effects of pure air, &c.; but confine myself to the mental losses. If the scenery of earth and sky is fitted to console, to gladden, and to enrich the mind with new and lofty impulses, then our crowded town-life robs us of no insignificant blessing. Great men have felt this to such an extent as to be willing to give up the advantages of our busy centres and to retire into some country solitude. Even this, however, it is said, will soon become impossible. The exigencies of growing population, together with the demands of agriculture and mining operations, will soon rob us of every untouched vestige of natural scenery, and human life will have to dispense with the poetry which has through all time nourished itself at the sources of nature's varied loveliness.

As an example of a positive evil resulting from advancing civilisation, I may point to the hard, dreary, and monotonous kinds of labour which are a feature of our advanced industry. It looks as though the growth of material discovery and of material wants, and the increased competition in trade, both among individuals and among nations, directly lead to the condemnation of a large section of society to the most menial and exhausting work. Think, for example, of the thousands of miners who toil for a great part of their waking life in the dark, dank bowels of the earth. Then remember the exhausting and deleterious labours involved in many of our manufacturing processes. Not only in the operations of industry but in all modes of active life the action of competition seems to beget a feverish rate of work, which is not only joyless, but accompanied by painful anxiety, and positively injurious to body and mind alike. The growth of our large centres of popula-

tion is uniformly accompanied by the appearance of all manner of risks to health unknown in a primitive state of society. These and other evils may well appear to be necessarily bound up with industrial progress.

Nobody would be less disposed than the present writer to assign an insignificant value to these facts. They are, no doubt, real and terrible, and are quite enough to deter any man from an easy and contented view of the advance hitherto attained by humanity. At the same time we must not let these evils stupify us, and render our vision unsteady and misty. No calm and impartial mind, I think, is likely to let his view of modern civilisation and of progress be determined by the wild talk of Rousseau or the undiscriminating æsthetic jeremiads of Mr. Ruskin. I think the following considerations will help to show that the evils of our modern civilisation have not the awful proportions which writers, some of whom, perhaps, were bent on producing a certain kind of literary effect, have been wont to ascribe to them.

First of all, then, with respect to the losses involved in progress, I think we are apt to fall into error in projecting our own susceptibilities into primitive man. When, for example, writers bemoan the loss of the picturesqueness of life consequent on material advance, it seems to be supposed that our simple-minded predecessors must have felt and enjoyed this aspect of their surroundings. But this is by no means correct. The picturesqueness of rustic life is a thing for the æsthetically cultivated mind, not for the peasant who leads this life. Even the delight of scenery seems to be realised but in a faint measure by those to whom nature in her loveliest manifestations is always accessible. The keenest love for nature's changing aspects appears to have been de-

veloped in modern times and among men to whom natural beauty, like old-fashioned picturesque costumes, has grown something comparatively rare and precious. I do not wish to under-rate the full value, æsthetic, intellectual, and moral, of intercourse with nature; I only want to guard against the illusion that the loss effected by progress is the same as if our uncivilised and half-civilised ancestors had all the keen sense of nature's beauty which is possessed by the cultivated modern mind.[1]

Again, if we turn to the positive evils attributed to progress, we shall see reason to temper our despondency. It is worth observing that many ills supposed to be incidents of civilisation are but changed forms of ancient evils. We know so little respecting the social condition of past ages, that it is often impossible to say whether some present burden has not been handed down, so to speak, from far-off times. Thus, to judge of the significance of the bodily disease and the crime which characterise our modern civilisation, it would be necessary to know something definite respecting the proportions of disease and crime in primitive modes of society; but this knowledge is inaccessible.[2]

Once more, many of the evils of modern life may with

[1] One might of course add the somewhat obvious remark that improvement in the means of locomotion does much to counteract the separation from nature effected by industrial centralisation. Though a contemporary Londoner cannot have nature's scenery as his daily possession, there is opened up to him as an occasional experience a much wider region of natural beauty; and these possibilities give to a cultivated person a fuller and richer enjoyment than his constant but limited surroundings afford to the dull uncultured rustic.

[2] Such data are not yet to hand, even if we take contemporary uncivilised communities as representing primitive societies; and this, as Mr. Spencer has recently admitted, is a very rough and inexact mode of reasoning.

perfect confidence be viewed as the accompaniments of greater benefits. There are certain cases in which this relation is obvious on the very face of the evil. The increase of evil is seen at a glance to be involved in the realisation of some quite incommensurable augmentation of good. As an example, I would select the fact that the pains attending bodily injuries become more intense the less frequently they have to be endured. A sensitive person to-day winces at a surgical operation which a hardy savage warrior would esteem as nothing. And this is due in part to the very fact of the infrequency of the experience. Familiarity with pain hardens the mind, whereas when it is rare and unfamiliar we shrink from it.

In other cases the accompanying advantage is less obvious, though not less real. For example, the tyranny of the majority, though a grievous evil in the present age, is clearly a result of a transference of political and social power from a handful of accidentally determined persons to the majority of a community. And it can hardly be doubted that on the whole the removal of the sovereignty of the few over the many, and the acquisition by the majority of an adequate representation of its interests and wishes, is a greater gain than the tyranny exercised by the majority over the minority can be an evil. It is conceivable, of course, that the rule of a foolish untrained mob might bring about worse evils than many wisely constituted oligarchies; but to this apparent objection the obvious retort is that power placed in the hands of the few has been known to work disastrous evils too.

As another instance of an evil which seems to be connected with a greater good, I would take the impatience shown by people now-a-days of their existing material and

social circumstances. I am far from regarding all this eagerness of ambition as a necessary result of progress. On the contrary, it appears to be largely the outgrowth of ignorance, illusion, and weak vanity. On the other hand, it seems clear that progress will tend to increase the tension of life, so to speak, to make men more desirous of bettering their condition. And this increased competition has, no doubt, its dark and disagreeable side. But is it not evident that these very aspirations owe their existence to an increase of benefits, namely, greater liberty and a wider scope for altering one's circumstances beneficially, and also an increase of knowledge respecting these possibilities? In fact, when we consider how many evils in modern life spring out of a foolish and impatient use of newly-acquired knowledge, we may see how large a part of the detrimental effect of progress is directly dependent on the presence of some larger amount of benefit.[1]

Lastly, it is all-important to ask how far forms of misery which appear to be incidents of our present civilisation are inseparable factors of progress. It is from this point of view that we can most effectually free ourselves from the depression into which the sight of contemporary suffering is fitted to sink our minds. With respect to the ills already referred to which attend our present stage of in-

[1] It is characteristic of the pessimist to look at the evil which thus accompanies the arrival of a greater good as the conspicuous fact. Thus, for example, Bahnsen writes ('Zur Philosophie der Geschichte'): 'A good part of the wounds to which advancing civilisation boasts of having brought healing have been first inflicted by this civilisation herself.' As an instance he gives the fact that railways have tended to separate friends before bringing them together, as if the result of railways on the whole were not to add to the possibilities of a wide social intercourse, and as if men would forsake their friends for some distant locality if there were no countervailing advantages to be secured.

dustry, the new modes of painful labour which advancing industry seems to demand from the producers of a country, it appears to me to be the one road of escape for a sympathetic spectator from a not unworthy sadness of spirit, to ask how far there reside in the processes of human progress as a whole any agencies for alleviating and removing these degrading and painful circumstances.

If the industrial impulse were the one all-regulating force in human advance, one might concede that these evils appear in their nature to be permanent. But it does not follow that because industrial advance is one of the first conditions of progress as a whole, or because it happens to be the most conspicuous feature of social development in the nineteenth century, it must always maintain a supreme place. Men desire other things besides mere increase of wealth; they want leisure to enjoy what they acquire; health, which is the condition of all enjoyment, and so on. Now, if they find that by pursuing this end of wealth as the one aim of existence, they run a risk of missing the real good of life, they will, one supposes, naturally begin sooner or later to slacken their efforts. It must be imagined, too, that growing intelligence will lead men to reflect more on the aims of life, and thus serve to correct such narrow and erroneous direction of effort.

To this the reader will, no doubt, rejoin: 'But this is not a matter for individual choice. The collier cannot alter his manner of life as long as wages keep where they are; and the hard-worked professional man, who only just manages to secure to his family a scanty livelihood and a decent house and personal appearance, is helpless as long as competition keeps at its present high-pressure point.'

This answer is very pertinent, and if there were no such

thing as concerted and collective human action the evil would seem to be irremovable. This brings us to the last aspect of progress considered in its bearing on human happiness; namely, the partial subsumption of the pursuit of the individual happiness under a collective pursuit of the general happiness. We have touched on progress as raising the individual's capacity for happiness, and as improving its external conditions and sources. Let us now glance at its effect in attaching the individual's welfare to the collective ends of social action.

That the range of progress already traversed is in the direction of such a conscious collective pursuit of happiness is, I think, indisputable. Even if we confine ourselves to political progress we see that it points to this result. The development of free political institutions has tended, however slowly, to provide a just representation of the most pressing interests of all members of the community. This growth in political action has aimed not only at removing unjust impediments to the free development of individual life, such as ancient legal class-privileges, as well as the less obvious kinds of wrong—for example, the preventible propagation of contagious disease, and so on—but also at supplying certain positive conditions, such as a universal elementary education, the popularisation of national endowments and treasures of art, &c.

If it be objected that it is no function of governments and laws to provide any of the positive sources of happiness to the individual, yet the effect may be secured by another means. The development of public sentiment has served, quite apart from legal enactments, both to discourage practices detrimental to others' happiness, and also to encourage actions which contribute to this result.

I do not here raise the question how far it is well either for law or for public opinion to seek to regulate the individual pursuit of happiness. Nobody will dispute the assertion that one or both of these agencies are rightly brought into play in removing, where practicable, impediments to happiness, as also in securing that all individuals born into society shall, as far as possible, start with a proper natural equipment for life and happiness. But if so, there appears to be no limit to the scope which lies open to collective action for reducing the evils of civilisation, repairing its losses, and even helping to hasten on its blessings.

Let the reader just consider for a moment the control which a society possesses over the conditions of happiness in the power of regulating its increase of population, whether by legal enactions or by social sentiment.[1] Does any reasonable person doubt that society will exercise this controlling influence as soon as it becomes deeply convinced of the relation of a reckless increase of population to the characteristic evils of our modern industrial civilisation? Again, is it doubtful that some check will be put to the right of propagation among diseased and criminal families, as soon as the full import of the modern doctrine of inheritance has been grasped by the national mind? When it becomes distinctly understood that by thus limiting the number and improving the average quality of the people who are to be our successors, we may add to the possibilities of happiness of each individual member of posterity the predominance of a very moderate amount

[1] If such an idea appear too impracticable and utopian, let the reader consult J. S. Mill's 'Political Economy' (Book II. chap. xi. sections 4 and 5), and see how public opinion even now acts in certain European communities both by law and by custom in checking improvident marriages, and so in limiting the population.

of altruistic sentiment will, one supposes, secure the performance of these collective services.

If the range of this united providential care for individual happiness is wide and unlimited in time, it appears also to be extensive in space. This collective action begins with the family, of which all the members unite to promote the security and success of each individual. The same spirit is now asserting itself in the nation, as a readiness to consider and, so far as possible, remedy, all individual wrong and disadvantage. Nay, more, it has just asserted itself in a yet wider area as a resolve to secure the rights of civilisation to a people trampled down in a distant country by a foreign and despotic rule. Who can determine the range of benefit flowing from this international human providence, supposing it is capable of being established?

I do not mean that these benefits will be easily secured as soon as the needful combining impulses are developed. I am well aware that they open up practical problems of the greatest complexity. Still, a reasonable person cannot doubt that a vast deal will be thus effected. Again, I would not undertake to say how soon the possible results of such an intelligent and benevolent control of the conditions of individual happiness will be secured. Still less should I be disposed to indicate in what particular way they are to be secured. It is enough to have shown that the power of modifying and improving the individual lot, whether near or distant in time or space, lies in that conjoint social action which already exists as a fact, and of which progress distinctly tends to widen the range. If this be so, one may reasonably look forward to a period, however distant, when each society (or some confederation of societies) will set itself to correct many of the seemingly permanent evils of

civilisation, whether by using all available and legitimate appliances for limiting population, by securing for all alike a larger number of the conditions of health, and by so controlling all industrial operations as to minimise the baneful effects of inequality of wealth, and to elevate men above the necessity of a wholly fatiguing and cheerless toil.

It will be seen that this conception of social progress involves a possibility of removing, or at least greatly reducing, not only many of the evils incident to an advanced civilisation, but also some of the obstacles to happiness which at first sight seem to be permanent circumstances of human life. Among these one of the most serious is undoubtedly the effect of natural temperament. No medical man doubts, few others doubt, that a gloomy temperament is correlated with some unhealthy features of the physical organisation—in other words, that it is a pathological phenomenon. At present we know little about the causes of these peculiarities. Yet it is probable that, as physiological and medical science—which are still, alas, in their infancy—begin to share in the rapid advance of science as a whole, man's knowledge of this natural infirmity, as of less subtle forms of disease, will be indefinitely enlarged. If so, however, it is reasonable to suppose that this obscure and yet powerful factor of individual happiness will to some extent be brought under human control. At least the antecedent circumstances might be defined in which the production of such a morbid cast of temperament is certain or highly probable; and if so, society might, if necessary, rightly interfere and prevent the disastrous result. I call it disastrous deliberately, for I am strongly of opinion that a highly irritable and despondent cast of mind is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of obstacles to human happiness.

Thus far we have considered progress as an historical generalisation and independent of the new doctrine of evolution. Let us now see how far this idea of evolution serves to modify the value which has here been assigned to progress.

The theory of evolution tells us that, over and above all the influences contributing to progress which are involved in the accumulation and tradition of knowledge and the other common possessions of society, there are other and deeper forces at work in the onward movement of mankind. Nay, more, the very processes of this accumulation would have been impossible but for these deeper agencies. In many societies no increase in knowledge, moral sentiment, &c., is discoverable, for historical progress has its deep-lying conditions which the theory of evolution discovers and formulates for us.

The great agency which thus underlies and sustains progress is the struggle for existence, and the natural selection of those individuals which have some advantage in the struggle. Provided a species multiplies beyond the existing means of existence, and individuals are born with certain variable peculiarities, physical or mental, some of which give their possessors an advantage in procuring sustenance, &c., it follows that these will outlive the others, and leave a more numerous progeny. Through the constant renewal of this process, which is greatly aided by the transmission by inheritance of all sufficiently fixed improvements of capacity, there arises as a result a certain progressive movement of the species.

This struggle takes place both between individuals of the same species and between different species. Also it operates between groups of individuals of the same species,

as human societies. In man, then, we have to consider the upward movement as depending first of all on a certain competition between the members of the same society, which tends to weed out all the weak and incompetent and to secure a constant increase of the average natural ability; in the second place, on an external competition between different societies, owing to which, those having superior advantages will tend gradually to displace the less-favoured groups, and thus an elevation of the aggregate of groups be realised.[1]

Supposing, as seems indisputable, that this process is to some extent involved in social progress, we have to inquire into its bearing on the problem of optimism and pessimism. It has often been said that the modern theory of natural selection throws a deep gloom over the world by showing that all advance in life is purchased at the cost of struggle and failure. On the other hand, the idea of evolution, by affirming the existence of an upward direction in the order of human affairs, seems to support a moderately hopeful view of the world. What is the precise value of the theory?

Nobody will deny that this principle has its dark and even ghastly aspect. The view of human life as a product of painful struggle, of all advance upwards as purchased at the cost of the defeat and extirpation of all but a few, is at first sight sufficiently awful. The first thing which strikes the popular mind, accustomed to think of the world as somehow ordered for individual human good, is the perfect indifference of this operation towards the interests of the individual:—

[1] The effect of conflict with other species, though, no doubt, an important factor in certain inaccessible stages of human development, need not here be taken into account.

> 'Are God and Nature, then, at strife,
> That Nature lends such evil dreams?
> So careful of the type she seems,
> So careless of the single life.'

The preservation and improvement of the species to the disregard of the individual looks like the substitution of a kind of metaphysical aim for the tender personal providence of a benevolent Being. Then, too, the fact that it is only a few who win in this conflict while the majority are overwhelmed is sufficiently appalling. The few, moreover, who survive, prosper, and perpetuate themselves in offspring, obtain this favour purely by accident, by some freak of spontaneous variation, and not as a reward for any acts of their own. Lastly, is it not a terrible fact that all life, even the successful included, should spring out of struggle—be the fruit, so to speak, of a soil which must be continually moistened with blood?

Are there any alleviations to this gloomy spectacle? It may, perhaps, be said that it is better than the other conceivable order of things, in which the weakly and incompetent are preserved, while the vigorous and competent go to the wall; for in this imaginary case misery would be perpetuated while happiness would be made evanescent. Still, there is not much comfort to be got out of this reflection. As a matter of fact, though each individual who is placed at a great disadvantage reaches a comparatively short duration of existence, yet, since the struggle has constantly to be renewed, there is involved the permanence of suffering in the consecutive generations of the race. The premature disappearance of the suffering individual tells for little, if a constant stream of such thwarted and crushed lives is a concomitant of the whole process.

I concede, then, that progress, so far as it depends on the

full energetic action of the struggle for existence and natural selection, looks much more like a formidable evil than a blessing. It would surely be better to do without the development of higher forms altogether, if this development can only be purchased at the cost of such a sharp and cruel conflict as that here described.

Yet a calm view of the facts shows us that though advance may be effected in this way, it is often secured without this amount of suffering. Even in the case of the lower species of animals, it seems reasonable to suppose that a certain amount of advance may have taken place in the absence of so severe a struggle. The fact seems to be that when the rate of multiplication is not too great relatively to the means of existence, the action of natural selection may assume a less energetic and more disguised form. The weakly tend to die before the strong, and to leave fewer offspring, and thus the upward movement is secured; but the struggle of the competing rivals is not sharp enough to necessitate the starving out or the destruction of the less favoured by the more favoured. And, as with individuals, so with races; we can easily conceive that one species of animals may, under favourable external circumstances, gradually outstrip and surpass in numbers another and related species without actual conflict, and without effecting the extirpation, or even a considerable reduction, of the less favoured species.

Further, it is doubtful how far the principle of natural selection has been the active instrument of the gradual elevation of animal organisms.[1] Mr. Spencer has always

[1] It hardly needs remarking that, so far as the upward development of organisms has been assisted by sexual selection, it is deprived of the dark features here ascribed to the process.

laid great emphasis on the influence of habit and the reaction of function on organ as a great co-operating cause in improving the natural capacity of a species; and Mr. Darwin, in his later works, is disposed to concede an important place to this agency. According to this principle, a species would attain very slowly to a certain improvement in strength, intelligence, and general capacity for life, even in the absence of struggle.

How far the past development of animal life has been of this more gradual and peaceful character, I do not pretend to say.[1] It is something, however, to show that under certain conditions it is possible. Our present concern is with the development of the human race, and the main question to be asked relates to the range of the principle of natural selection in this process. Is the struggle for existence, as here described, a universal and necessary condition of human progress?

If we look on the earlier stages of the progress of mankind it seems that natural selection has played a conspicuous part in the process. The great difference between the operation in the case of men and in that of the lower animals seems to be that whereas in the latter the variations which supply the points of advantage to be preserved by natural selection relate to bodily peculiarities, in the former they concern mental peculiarities. Man, according to Mr. Wallace—and Mr. Darwin appears to accept this view—outgrew the need of new bodily adaptations when his brain reached a certain stage of development, and mental supe-

[1] It seems probable that the conflict has been most severe in inclement regions, where food is scarce and the maintenance of life difficult. On the other hand, in fairly favourable circumstances, there may have been some upward movement of species without any of the more cruel features of the struggle for existence.

riority became an equivalent for a bodily advantage. Yet, though this fact tells for the dignity of man—a conclusion on which Mr. Wallace insists with some fervour—it is none the less an illustration of the action of conflict and natural selection, and, so far as we are here concerned, is much the same thing as the earlier forms of the process.

On the other hand, though natural selection may have done much, it must not be forgotten that many of the less rapid advances of the race may have been attained, as I have already hinted, without that severe rivalry and painful struggle which characterise the most energetic action of this principle. Also it is to be borne in mind that other forces, as sexual selection and habit, may have contributed no little even in these earlier stages of human progress. Accordingly it is by no means safe to reason that the earlier history of human progress must be a tale of cruel internecine struggle.

If we turn to later stages of progress, to the onward movement of civilised communities, we find that the action of natural selection is greatly checked by the development of certain mental impulses. Thus the struggle between individuals of the same community is limited and counteracted by the growth of benevolence and sympathy. All aid to others clearly limits the action of rivalry, and so the area of natural selection; and all charitable relief, by assisting those who would otherwise succumb in the struggle, tends directly to counteract the action of natural selection. It may be true, as Mr. Darwin asserts, that sympathy was first developed because of its utility to the community;[1] none the

[1] Mr. Wallace thinks sympathy is one of the attributes of man which cannot be accounted for by natural selection.

less does it serve to check the operation of natural selection as between individuals.

Not only so, the latest advances of civilised communities have clearly developed impulses which limit the action of natural selection in relation to different societies. As Mr. Darwin himself says: 'With highly civilised nations continued progress depends in a subordinate degree on natural selection, for such nations do not supplant and exterminate one another as do savage tribes.' That is to say, after a certain stage of moral and intellectual development is reached, impulses manifest themselves which stay the action of struggle not only between individuals, but also between aggregates or communities. The extension of industrial operations and the rise of international commerce, the expansion of the sentiments of duty and of benevolence beyond the limits of country and race, these serve to bind civilised nations together in relations of amity.

It is, no doubt, true that even in the most advanced communities natural selection still plays a certain part. Thus all competition between individuals for wealth, public position, fame, &c., illustrates this principle. Similarly, with respect to all international competition in scientific discoveries, manufactures, and so on.

It might, therefore, be said with a certain plausibility that recent progress among the most highly advanced nations is mainly due to that amount of the action of natural selection which still survives. But this affirmation could not, I think, be seriously maintained in view of the rapid progress which some of the foremost nations of the world have recently made. As we have seen, even Mr. Darwin allows that the latest stages of progress are in part independent of this principle. If we consider the many ways in

which the action of this force is crossed and limited by the agencies of an advanced civilisation, we must, I think, come to the conclusion that the progress made under these circumstances is in no inconsiderable part ascribable to the action of other forces. To quote Mr. Wallace: 'Among civilised nations at the present day it does not seem possible for natural selection to act in any way so as to secure the permanent advancement of morality and intelligence; for it is indisputably the mediocre, if not the low, both as regards morality and intelligence, who succeed best in life and multiply fastest. Yet there is undoubtedly an advance—on the whole a steady and a permanent one—both in the influence on public opinion of a high morality, and in the general desire for intellectual elevation; and, as I cannot impute this in any way to "survival of the fittest," I am forced to conclude that it is due to the inherent progressive power of those glorious qualities which raise us so immeasurably above our fellow animals.'

It is, then, I consider, a fair inference from the facts, that supposing the lower stages of the mental development of man to have required the most energetic co-operation of the agency of natural selection, the higher stages lie to a large extent within the reach of his own conscious actions. And there is nothing mysterious in this. Conscious life as a whole, as Mr. Spencer has well shown, is simply a transformation into a subjective psychical form of processes which constitute pre-conscious and purely physical life. The careful and deliberate action by which a man protects himself against distant evils, is in its essential features analogous to the purely reflex action by which a decapitated frog withdraws its leg from the irritant applied to its nerve. Similarly that which nature or mechanical

contrivance has effected for collective mankind in the unreflecting stage of their existence, they may afterwards effect for themselves by conscious thought and effort.

I would maintain, then, that man has already reached the point at which he is capable of anticipating, so to speak, the action of natural selection, and of directing for himself his future upward advance.[1] Already he is able to set in action forces which do the work of natural selection in raising himself to a higher plane of intellectual and moral attainment. Let us see how this is possible even now, and whether the forces at our disposal contain a promise of producing even greater results in the future history of the race.

As I have already remarked, a moderate development of the capacity of moral feeling and sympathy limits the action of natural selection. Moreover, these sentiments, even if first called forth by natural selection, tend to grow indefinitely both in intensity and in extent by the mere force of exercise or habit. Now, supposing that a certain amount of these moral impulses is shared by the majority of a community, and is fixed and embodied in law and public opinion, and with this a corresponding degree of intelligence, we shall then have a force capable of securing the future improvement of the community in all the elements of well-being and happiness. As surely as a certain stage of moral or intellectual culture in the youth leads to an independent desire and effort for further knowledge and moral excellence, will the attainment by a community of a

[1] To some extent, too, he effects a like result with respect to those animals which he takes under his protection. See an interesting article on Cruelty to Animals, by Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson, in the 'Fortnightly Review' of September 1876.

like stage of intellectual and moral development be followed by a similar line of independent endeavour. And as a matter of history few will deny that the recent progress of our own country in all that is valuable and good, is due in no small measure to the elevation of the moral forces of public opinion to a prime agent of national life, and to the constant improvement of these forces. Indeed, this is practically conceded by Mr. Darwin in the last edition of his 'Descent of Man,' where he quotes approvingly the view of Mr. John Morley, that 'the more efficient causes of progress seem to consist of a good education during youth, while the brain is impressible, and of a high standard of excellence inculcated by the ablest and best men, embodied in the laws, customs, and traditions of the nation, and enforced by public opinion' (p. 143).

If now we suppose this public opinion to be still further enlightened as to the real causes of well-being, physical and moral, and still further moralised so as to include in the object of its sympathy and beneficent impulse not only the contemporary generation but coming generations, it is evident, I think, that we have here a force fitted to supplant to a large extent the action of natural selection. Thus, as I have hinted, such a well-formed public opinion might help to secure the improved well-being of future generations by seeking to limit population and so to remove the harsher aspects of competition. Possibly it might be led to devise a new industrial system in which competition, and so struggle for the means of subsistence, would be to a large extent eliminated. By forbidding improvident marriages, by rewarding all kinds of excellence, such a public opinion might secure in a painless manner the benefits which natural selection ultimately brings.

If, finally, we conceive this public opinion extended from a single community to a confederation of enlightened nations, we shall have a force which is fitted to mitigate, if not in a considerable measure to dispense with, the action of natural selection in relation to rival communities. Of such far-reaching beneficent action we have already, as I have remarked, some illustration; and there seems to me to be nothing chimerical in the supposition that international benevolence, wisely regulated, may at some distant period secure the improvement of the collective race, quite apart from natural selection.

I do not mean to say that natural selection will ever cease to be a co-operating factor in progress. It certainly will not within any period distinctly conceivable to the present generation. And it is a question whether, even if man could get rid of it altogether, it would be well for him to do so. Provided, as seems certain, that it may be shorn of its uglier features, it would appear to be the part of wise men to retain an agency which has been so potent in the past in ameliorating human existence. In the shape of a kindly rivalry, whether between individuals or between nationalities, this force may ever remain one of the natural causes most useful to mankind.[1] On the other hand, if, as many of the most thoughtful are disposed to believe, socialism and communism contain in germ the highest con-

[1] It is worth remarking that man's conscious effort may be guided by the useful results of natural selection. In other words, he may execute an artificial selection not unlike that practised in relation to domestic animals and plants. Thus he may seek by social sanctions to discourage the multiplication of the confessedly inefficient, if not to encourage by inducements the multiplication of the most efficient. That such a suggestion should now seem too arbitrary and akin to the tyrannies of the Platonic Republic, does not prove that it is for ever impracticable.

ception of national and international relations, it would seem that the principle of natural selection will be confined to a very narrow region of existence, if, indeed, it finds any field for actual exercise. In this case it will exist simply as a potentiality, as a latent force ready to leap forth, and do its work if at any time organised human effort fails and man relapses into his old and less noble habits of thought and action. That such a decline is possible, when once the dominant portion of mankind have reached the stage of enlightenment and virtuous disposition here described, I am far from maintaining. At the same time it is certainly a conceivable contingency.

I think it will be admitted, then, that there is nothing in the principle of natural selection which deprives human progress, looked at as a whole in the past and in the future, of the high value which has here been accorded it. Even if the earlier stadia of man's upward journey were achieved by dint of much pain, this suffering is more than counterbalanced by the ample blessings which have crowned its later stages.

A word may be said in conclusion as to the limits of progress. It is agreed among historians and biologists alike that progress has hitherto been realised only on certain complex conditions. What these are it is not easy to say. Mr. Darwin, in one of his last works ('Descent of Man,' second edition), says that 'progress seems to depend on many concurrent favourable conditions far too complex to be followed out.' Sir Henry Maine calls attention to the fact that 'the greatest part of mankind have never shown a particle of desire that its civil institutions should be improved,' and this, as Mr. Darwin remarks, suggests the difficulties in the way of realising progress. Whether, in

the absence of the forces, whatever these are, which tend to thrust back a community the exercise of intellectual and other capacity is capable of producing a slow measure of advance, seems to be doubtful. At any rate, it is pretty certain that hitherto races have started in an appreciable movement of progress only under certain very special conditions, among which the influence of natural selection seems to take a prominent place.

As to the amount of collective progress which has hitherto been reached by the race through the actual distribution of its favourable conditions, our knowledge is very scanty. It is sometimes said to be doubtful whether within the limits of the historic period any aggregate improvement has been attained. It seems to me, however, to be fairly certain from a consideration of the facts of history alone, that some amount of aggregate movement has taken place; and this conclusion is clearly necessitated by the adoption of the idea that human history is but one phase of a vast and complex evolution of life.

It is, however, another question what the future range of progress in space is likely to be. There lies, I conceive, in the processes of international contact, which are spreading over a wider and wider area in our rapidly moving era, the possibility of a vast extension of the benefits of progress and a great acceleration of its natural rapidity. As civilised races settle in uncivilised regions of the globe it seems certain that the backward aborigines must either accept and assimilate certain elements of culture or succumb in the struggle. Examples of these results are afforded us in the effects of missionary labours, for instance, in the South Sea Islands, and in the gradual extermination of apparently unimprovable races, as the Indians

occupying the outlying territory of the United States. I do not wish to justify any attempt on the part of a civilised race to oust and displace an inferior one, nor do I wish to affirm that all contact between uncivilised and civilised races has been for the good of the former. I would simply record the facts of such intercourse. In view of these facts it cannot, one supposes, be doubtful that the higher branches of the human family have it already, and will have it more and more hereafter, in their power (provided the requisite motives are present) to extend the benefits of progress even to those divisions of the race which, but for such extraneous influences, might never have reached the advantages of an advanced civilisation.

An exhaustive consideration of the limits of progress would embrace the question of the probable duration of human development both in the past and in the future. Let us see how far the recognition of such limits would affect our present conclusion respecting the worth of progress.

With respect to the anterior limit, geological science does not yet pretend, except in a very conjectural way, to assign the duration of human existence. We may be certain that this duration is vastly greater than was supposed prior to geological investigations. According to the general view of the evidence already ascertained, man must have existed upwards of twenty thousand years, and possibly hundreds of thousands of years. According to the negative evidence of the geological record, our species does not date earlier than the Tertiary period—probably the end of this period.[1]

While the anterior limit is thus only very vaguely ascertainable, the question of the posterior limit appears to be

[1] For a summary of the latest views on the antiquity of man see Hæckel's 'History of Creation,' vol. ii. p. 296, &c.

altogether insoluble. According to the teachings of modern physical science, there are agencies at work which must in the course of long ages not only render our planet unfit for life of any kind, but also effect the disruption and dissipation of the whole of our solar system. Yet, so far as I know, no attempt has been made to assign, however roughly, the date of these revolutions.[1] It seems, indeed, to be generally agreed that they are vastly remote, and may, so far as we can yet ascertain, belong to a distant future which is wholly inconceivable to our minds.

Let us now look at the bearing of these vague conclusions on our present problem. I have allowed that the past stages of human progress may have been attended with more evil than good. At the same time it has been pointed out that its later stages appear to show a clear gain for mankind. If, then, it could be made out as a probability that the future duration of our species will vastly exceed the past, we should have some ground for conjecturing that progress on the whole is a large and immeasurable benefit.

Another conclusion would appear to follow. We have resolved to measure the value of the world by human feeling. According to this stand-point the world may be said to be good if the whole sum of human life throughout the total duration of the species is found to yield a large balance of happiness. Now I have tried to show that even if the average life of mankind in the past has been a surplus of misery, progress tends to reverse this result by indefinitely increasing the proportion of happy to un-

[1] Helmholtz has, indeed, calculated that the sun is radiating heat at such a rate that its diameter will diminish by about one-twentieth in the next million years.—See a paper in the 'Philosophical Magazine,' quoted by Mr. Herbert Spencer in his 'First Principles' (p. 452).

happy beings. If, then, it could be made out as probable that the future duration of human existence is wholly incommensurable with its past duration, we should have some ground for hoping that in its totality it amounts to a positive good. We might then say that, after all, the emergence of our planet out of its ocean of diffused matter was no dire calamity, but rather a felicitous event.

Yet from our present point of view we may well abandon such subtle reasonings to the purely speculative mind. For all practical purposes the relative value of past and future existence is an idle question. If, on the whole, the extinct generations of men have, along with their dumb companions, lived and laboured only to reap a dreary surplusage of suffering, their death-calmed features betray no after-sense of their woful experience. The story is told and cannot now be altered. On the other hand the absolute value of the future is a matter of supreme moment for our practical instincts. The lives that have to be lived are still a reality, and even to us of the passing hour they seem from afar to send faint cries for apostolic help. It is enough then if when we peer into the darkness of the world to be, we can faintly descry the form of a good which triumphs over evil, and triumphs more and more. Such an inspiring view of the future has, I conceive, been justified by the foregoing argument.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SOURCES OF PESSIMISM.

HAVING now completed our journey of investigation in the somewhat inclement regions of pessimism, let us review our wanderings so as to see what results have been reached.

First of all, then, scientific and speculative pessimism has been found to be an unverified and in many respects distinctly incorrect doctrine. The attempt to prove that human life always is and must be an excess of misery shows itself, when looked at in a calm and critical light, to be a complete failure. On the contrary, an impartial view of the facts of life and the teachings of science properly so called has led us to believe that happiness, interpreted in a rational sense, is and has been attained by some indeterminable proportion of mankind. Even if, however,—which is far from probable—it could be made out that this number has been an inconsiderable one in the past, it is certain that human progress tends, however slow the process may be, very largely to heighten the quality of individual happiness and to increase the proportion of those to whom it is a possibility. And even if the existing order of things and human life itself are limited in duration, the conclusion is, for all practical purposes, too remote to modify the value of progress. As far as we can see, the world will move through its 'ringing grooves of change' long enough for mankind to raise their condition indefinitely, and to secure

for themselves, and even in a lesser degree for the lower animals who are dependent on their protection, a mode of life which, though far from being a state of ecstatic bliss, will be held by sober-minded persons to have a real and even a high value.

Now this conclusion appears to me to provide an adequate basis for practice. It presents to us a distinctly visible and attainable goal towards which our efforts may reasonably direct themselves. Even if it could be shown that it is vain as yet for the individual to aim at his own happiness, there remains the alternative of erecting the future good of mankind into an object of life-endeavour. That it is possible, when the appropriate emotional disposition is cultivated, to make this the crowning motive of life, few, if any, will deny. It may be repeated, too, that where there is this benevolent and far-reaching type of mind, the end aimed at is of a character to secure to the individual himself a certain, even though a moderate, quantity of happiness.

Our line of reasoning provides us, then, with a practical conception which lies midway between the extremes of optimism and pessimism, and which, to use a term for which I am indebted to our first living woman-writer and thinker, George Eliot, may be appropriately styled Meliorism. By this I would understand the faith which affirms not merely our power of lessening evil—this nobody questions—but also our ability to increase the amount of positive good. It is, indeed, only this latter idea which can really stimulate and sustain human endeavour. It might be possible, if life were not to be got rid of, to bring ourselves to labour in order to reduce to a minimum an inevitable excess of misery. But, as I have already hinted, pessimism would

seem to dictate to wise men the most speedy conclusion of life, both their own and that of all for whom they care. Meliorism, on the other hand, escapes this final contradictory outcome of a life-theory. By recognising the possibility of happiness and the ability of each individual consciously to do something to increase the sum-total of human welfare present and future, meliorism gives us a practical creed sufficient to inspire ardent and prolonged endeavour. Lives nourished and invigorated by this ideal have been and still may be seen among us, and the appearance of but a single example proves the adequacy of the belief.

Meliorism, then, is fitted to stimulate human endeavour, and so has the qualifications of a practical conception. In this it seems to me to be vastly superior both to pessimism and to optimism. That pessimism must paralyse effort needs not be proved. Schopenhauer preaches quiescence as the only possible aim of a sane man, and Hartmann only succeeds in appearing to supply a stimulus to action by means of the wildest freaks of metaphysical fancy. The fact that neither Schopenhauer, Hartmann, nor any other pessimist consistently abstained from seeking all the illusory good of life simply shows that men are often wiser (as well as better) than their creeds.

Does it fare better with optimism? At first sight a rosy image of life might seem to be the very best allurer of endeavour. If the garden of the world is full of luscious fruits and fragrant flowers, there appears to be the strongest inducement for going forth and culling enjoyment and for inviting others to accompany us, and there is no doubt that optimism comports with, and even encourages, an easy and agreeable kind of activity. On the other hand, however, it seems to me to tend to enfeeble and to paralyse all the

loftier and more arduous varieties of human effort. If everything is as it ought to be, if 'whatever is is right,' if men do, after all, reach happiness, and all evil is only the cold stepping-stone which our foot has to touch for a moment before we plunge into the warm floods of felicity, the question naturally arises, 'Why need I trouble myself about my own or others' concerns?' The individual Calvinist, who is thoroughly assured that his eternal welfare is safe in the hands of God, has a powerful motive for moral and spiritual laziness; and if many eminent Calvinists have not fallen into this sloth, it is because they did not fully realise the logical outcome of their creed, or because the healthy moral impulses were already too deeply fixed as habits to be modified by new beliefs. So, one imagines, the human race, if it once brought itself to believe in the necessary excellence and perfection of life, would speedily relax all the higher kind of moral endeavour.[1]

The foregoing applies only to the most unqualified form of optimism. If, on the other hand, we frame a practical optimism, and say that life is as good as it could be, provided we make the best of it (which seems to be the practical faith of the best Christians), we, no doubt, reach an idea most encouraging to effort. Logically speaking, indeed, it appears to provide the most sustaining among all conceivable practical principles. Yet, as a matter of fact, men do not easily keep in view the proper logical outcome of this principle. The influences which encourage to sloth with respect to all the higher kinds of exertion are so numerous and powerful that any authoritative doctrine which seems to favour

[1] Let the reader refer to J. S. Mill's eloquent posthumous essay on Nature in order to see how a superstitious admiration of the spontaneous course of things has tended to retard human effort.

it is seized with avidity as a justification. Now, nothing is more natural than the step from the proposition 'All is well, provided I do my part,' to the same proposition robbed of its qualification. The prominent idea is still the rightness and excellence of the world's arrangements as a whole; and when this is deeply fixed on the mind, activity is apt to lose its main-spring. And thus it happens that so many Christians, though theoretically under an obligation to exert themselves, are practically hindered from doing so.

We have thus reached a conclusion widely divergent from that of modern pessimism, even though it escapes the opposite extreme of a blind optimism. It is, undoubtedly, a very rough conclusion, and possibly the evidence here brought forward in its favour will hardly seem to be convincing to the more sceptical class of mind. Such persons are wont to regard all inquiry into the worth of the world as idle and unworthy of the wise man. To take life as it is, and to make the best of it, not to seek too curiously to determine its worth, may well seem to be the part of a sensible if not of a philosophic mind. This attitude of mind is well represented by Voltaire at the close of *Candide*. 'Travaillons sans raisonner,' says Martin, 'c'est le seul moyen de rendre la vie supportable;' and again, Candide, in answer to Pangloss's amusing optimistic sophistries, 'Cela est bien dit, mais il faut cultiver notre jardin.' On the other hand, all will admit that some idea of worth in existence, if reached by sober methods of reflection, will greatly add to the motor forces which sustain our action. Such a result I have striven to secure. Of its logical value I must now leave my readers to decide.

In closing our examination of pessimism, it may be

worth while to dwell for a minute or two on some of the influences which appear to have given rise to, and to foster, the belief in general, and to have lent it so great a vitality at the present day. The beliefs of the optimist and the pessimist, like many others, are the result partly of external impressions and partly of internal dispositions. If external impressions were the sole source of these doctrines, it is difficult to see how they could be so irreconcileable. Moreover, as we have seen, neither optimism nor pessimism can lay claim to be a strictly logical belief—that is to say, the pure result of observation and induction. And yet the circumstance that both the optimist and the pessimist appeal to facts renders it probable that the environment as well as the individual organism has something to do with the production of these opinions. In fact, since they are beliefs respecting the external world in relation to human feeling, it seems obvious that men must have arrived at them by help of certain perceptions. Let us look at each of these factors, beginning with the internal.

The first question which here naturally suggests itself is whether pleasure and pain, as modes of primary sensibility, stand in a constant ratio to one another. By primary sensibility I mean sensation in its narrow sense, or that mode of pleasure and pain which depends directly and exclusively on nervous stimulation and involves no previous mental action, like the pleasures and pains of recollection and imagination. Do pleasure and pain uniformly rise and fall together, so that a person specially sensitive to pleasure must in the same proportion be sensitive to pain? Does it follow that because a man suffers much—for example, when undergoing a surgical operation—he is in the same measure capable of enjoying?

This simple relation between sensibility to pleasure and to pain seems to be commonly assumed as self-evident. Yet it may, I think, be reasonably doubted. We suppose that pleasure and pain are two opposed modes of sensation, as those of white and black, yet the resemblance between the two cases is not perfect. Pleasure and pain are not correlative sensations of a single organ, as light and dark, sweet and bitter. They are common modes of feeling extending throughout our sensational and emotional life. That they are two opposites is indisputable. Nobody fails to recognise that a certain quantity of pain is the exact contrast of a similar quantity of pleasure. That, further, there is some rough general connection between them is also undeniable. By this I mean that in a certain class of mind known as the emotional temperament, high sensibility to pleasure goes with high sensibility to pain, whereas in another class, the dull phlegmatic temperament, a low degree of each sensibility is observable. Yet it does not follow from this that pleasure and pain must uniformly vary in precisely the same ratio.

A little reflection on the changes of feeling which we all experience in consequence of varying bodily and mental conditions suggests the probability of a partial independence of these two modes of sensibility. There are times and circumstances when our pains seem to preponderate over our pleasures; the impressions which are ordinarily pleasurable become indifferent, and those which at other times are only slightly painful grow intensely so. In other words, the whole scale of feeling is slightly shifted towards the unfavourable pole. At other times a precisely opposite effect results: painful impressions undergo a certain decrease of their customary intensity, whereas pleasurable ones show a corre-

sponding increase. At least, this seems to be the simplest way of expressing those changes of feeling of which we are aware when we pass from a cheerful to a depressed tone of mind, and *vice versâ.*

A similar law of variation discloses itself to view when we observe the differences of sensibility among different persons. The popular judgment distinguishes the cheerful from the despondent mind as the 'happy' and the 'unhappy' temperament. And this phraseology seems to favour the supposition that there is a radical difference in the inherent susceptibilities of the mind in relation to pleasure and to pain. Careful observation appears decidedly to support the popular idea. That there are people more or less sensitive to pleasure and pain alike is, as I have already remarked, indisputable. What we have now to consider is the further distinction as to the direction which variations of sensibility are apt to assume in certain cases. We all of us know people who seem to be much more sensitive to pleasure than to pain, and conversely. The difference resolves itself into an increase of intensity in one class of feelings and a corresponding decrease in the other class. Thus in the case of the mind specially responsive to pleasurable stimulation the pleasures are more intense, the pains less so, than in the case of the opposite type of mind.

Let us now assume the existence of a medium mental constitution in which the average intensities of the various classes of pleasure and pain are felt to be approximately equal; the one mode of sensation being just as desirable or attractive as the other is repugnant.[1] We may say, then,

[1] This must, of course, be taken as a very rough and abstract hypothesis. The relation of the average pleasure to the average pain varies in every case according to the class of susceptibility selected (*e.g.* sensations

that some persons deviate from this ideal mean in the direction of an excess of pleasure over pain, others in the direction of an excess of pain over pleasure.

We may now pass from the elementary or primary form of sensibility to some of its higher manifestations. The pleasures and pains which are the result of perception, depend not exclusively on what I must call, for want of a better phrase, the immediate responsiveness of the mind to bodily stimuli. They are not, like simple sensations, immediate and necessary results of external actions. They involve the reaction of attention, also the co-operation of the intellectual processes (memory and imagination). Hence, they are to some extent under the control of volition; of this more presently. For the present we have simply to note the action of the inequalities of sensibility to pleasure and pain already described.

Where pleasure, as a primary feeling or sensation, is more intense than pain it will remain as a more impressive element in the region of ideas.[1] We shall remember it better and imagine it better than its opposite. A corresponding result must follow when pain is a more intense sensation than pleasure. Let us now see how this will affect the emotional quality of our perceptions. Suppose that two objects, of which one has agreeable, the other disagreeable associations (of about equal value, positive and negative, to our 'mean temperament'), simultaneously

of sight or of taste). A closer approximation to a fixed standard might be obtained by assuming a medium temperament in which the minimum and maximum degrees of pleasure and of pain exactly neutralise one another.

[1] I here make abstraction of the circumstance of relative frequency, and assume that excess of pleasure (as defined above) involves a preponderance of the sum of enjoyment above that of the corresponding pain.

present themselves to the eye of a person endowed with a special primary sensibility to pleasure.. The idea of the pleasurable sensations suggested by the first object will return with greater vividness than that of the painful sensations suggested by the second. Hence the first object will more deeply impress consciousness, more powerfully attract attention, than the second, and thus it will acquire a reality which the other misses. A like result will obviously occur in the case of the opposite type of mind.

So much is the result of the difference of primary sensibility to pleasure and to pain. But more than this is here observable. An object only slightly agreeable may, in the case of a happily constituted mind, prevail in this rivalry for attention over one much more disagreeable. How is this? A further difference must clearly be postulated. Not only does the happy mental temperament mean a certain displacement of the scale of sensations of pleasure and pain in the favourable direction, it involves a special tendency of the mind to pass into a state of pleasurable feeling. Where, as in the case of visual perception, we are to a large extent free to respond or not to respond to a given external stimulation, there emerges into view a further difference with respect to the relative attractions of pleasure and pain. The mind may thus betray a natural affinity, so to speak, for pleasure rather than for pain, and conversely.

We have but to take one step more to see that the pure action of the reproductive and imaginative faculties will, in a still further degree, be swayed by the individual differences of sensibility just pointed out. When thinking of the past or imagining the future, with attention wholly unfettered by present objects, the happy mind will naturally lean to a pleasant order of thoughts. Both the special

intensity and impressibility of primary pleasures, and the special readiness of the mind to fall into a pleasurable mode of feeling, will serve, apart from any action of volition, to draw the imagination towards the pleasurable region of experience. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the unhappy cast of mind.

Let us seek to formulate these facts as well as we can on their psychological side, reducing them to their simplest expression. Pleasure and pain are modes of feeling or emotion. Hence we may expect to understand these differences by help of the laws of our emotional life in general.

It is a simple law of this life that any particular variety of emotion, such as love or anger, when present in the mind, tends to conserve and to intensify itself.[1] When excited by an impulse of affection towards a person, the mind is disposed to go on feeling in this particular way. Hence new currents of sentiment which are fitted to unite with and so to swell the original are welcome, while antagonistic currents are excluded. Hence, too, ideas which are fitted to excite the first currents are favoured, while those of a nature to awaken a discordant feeling are opposed in the rivalry of associative reproduction. To revert to the example of the affectionate friend, the existing feeling attracts all ideas of estimable and amiable qualities in the person towards whom it is cherished, and repels all suggestions of unlovely or hateful qualities.

Is it possible to bring the differences of sensibility to pleasure and pain under this principle? To a large extent this seems to be possible. The happy mental temperament

[1] Within certain limits, of course, since every emotional state has its maximum duration, after which exhaustion sets in.

appears to rest on a constant fund of agreeable feeling, which fund is commonly known under the phrase cheerful tone or 'good spirits.' Similarly, the unhappy temperament probably involves a constant undertone of slightly painful or uncomfortable feeling. This factor may with some plausibility be regarded as answering to a permanent form of emotion of a certain kind. From this view of the matter two results would seem to flow. First of all, the underlying mass of vague feeling, whether pleasurable or painful, by combining with the result of external stimulations, would produce that shifting of the scale of definite sensations of pleasure and pain either to the favourable or unfavourable pole, which has been described above.[1] Thus for example, the man endowed with a flow of intensely happy feeling would realise a much greater intensity of pleasure from the various impressions of a beautiful landscape than one devoid of this internal and pre-existing factor.

Not only so, by supposing this difference of temperament to consist in the possession of a permanent fund of raw material of agreeable or disagreeable feeling, we might account for the special readiness of the mind to pass into one of the opposed modes of feeling. Since this fund would be an equivalent of a special emotion, it would tend to favour the rise of definite feelings of the same order. Thus the store of pleasant feeling would attract pleasurable sensations or emotions of all varieties (and their accompanying ideas) just as a sentiment of love, once present, would attract new modes of this emotion and its kindred sentiments. Similarly,

[1] It might be supposed that this constant factor would serve to intensify the value of the opposite class of feelings as modes of change and contrast. This effect is probably produced; yet it must obviously be less influential than the sustaining effect described in the text.

the fund of uncomfortable feeling would serve as an attractive force in relation to any painful feelings awakened by external objects or called up by the free play of association of ideas.

It seems possible, then, to ascribe, hypothetically at least, much of this special natural affinity of mind for pleasure and for pain to the action of a permanent fund of undiscriminated emotional consciousness. Yet this idea hardly suffices for all the phenomena. At least it seems probable that there is a supplementary mental force at work here. This, too, may be found by a reference to the general laws of emotional phenomena. A particular variety of emotion—say, anger or fear—is favoured not only by a pre-existing excitation of this feeling, but also by what we must call, on its psychological side, a permanent latent disposition. To experience dread at this particular moment is made easy, either by the fact of our just having experienced it, or by the existence of a natural or acquired propensity to timidity. Owing to this propensity, all objects fitted to awaken this emotion will have an advantage in the struggle for the mind's external attention. So, again, all recollections and imaginations having this relation to the feeling will tend to prevail over those which want this relation.

Let us apply this idea to pleasure and pain. The happy temperament probably involves not only a permanent bias to pleasurable sensation in the shape of a store of actual agreeable feeling, but also an adaptation of mind to this mode of feeling. Pleasing objects arrest the attention of such a person, and agreeable imaginations fill his reflective consciousness, in part because his mind is naturally disposed to fall into the pleasurable state rather than into its opposite. A like explanation must be given of the readiness

of the man of unhappy mental temperament to lapse into painful feeling, as sense of annoyance, dislike, fear and so on.

Let us now turn to the other and physiological side of these phenomena. Unfortunately for our present purposes little has been done by modern physiology to assign the physical equivalents of the well-marked differences of mental disposition. The old doctrine of bodily temperament, according to which the peculiarities of a man's physical constitution, as well as those of his mental disposition, were referred to varying proportions of certain fluids (as seen in the terms sanguineous, choleric, phlegmatic, melancholic, &c.), is now quite exploded. The phrenological basis of mental character, too, is now rejected by the first authorities. Little, if anything, has been done to substitute a new and more scientific theory of the basis of mental disposition. In this state of things we must, it is clear, have recourse to vague conjecture.

So far as the happy and unhappy temperaments rest on a fund of feeling, this may with some probability be referred to the combined action of the sensory fibres connecting the brain and the bodily organs. The systemic or organic sensations which arise from the simultaneous states of the several organs, digestive, respiratory, &c., appear, as Professor Ferrier has lately pointed out, to be the basis of our emotional life. When the condition of these organs is a healthy one, and their functions vigorous, the psychical result is an undiscriminated mass of agreeable feeling. When the state of the organs is unhealthy, and their functions feeble or impeded, the psychical result is a similar mass of disagreeable feeling.

Let us now turn to the other way of viewing the pecu-

liarities of the happy and unhappy emotional temperament, namely as a special readiness to pass into pleasure or pain. Here the fact of the connection of mental and bodily phenomena enables us to give a tangible meaning to the expression 'tendency,' or 'disposition.' We may safely conclude that this consists in some peculiarities of the nervous structure in consequence of which the nerves react much more easily in a pleasurable than in a painful mode of action.

In what consist these differences of structure? If we knew the precise nervous substratum of pleasurable and painful functions we might answer this question. If, for example, all painful stimulation involves (as some contend) an excess of nervous action, one might argue with some plausibility that the special morbid sensibility to pain characteristic of the unhappy temperament is connected with a deficiency of nervous energy, in consequence of which excitations become excessive and exhausting sooner and in a greater degree than they otherwise would do. If, again (as others say), pain arises from a particular form of excitation—for example, a broken and arythmic mode of molecular vibration—one might suppose that in the nervous organism of the unhappy temperament the minute elements are so arranged, or have such a form (in consequence, perhaps, of defective nutrition), as most easily to take on this unfavourable mode of movement. How far either or both of these hypothetical agencies are actually involved, must be left for the present quite unsettled.

It may be well to say something respecting the relation of this contrast of the happy and unhappy temperament to the other well-recognised differences of emotional disposition. I have already hinted that there is such a contrast

between the dull and the sensitive mind—that is to say, between the mind which is slow to feel either pleasure or pain, and is but little excited by these, and the mind which is quickly excited. This contrast coincides pretty exactly with that of the emotional and unemotional, or the excitable and unexcitable temperament. This difference, again, clearly depends on some point of dissimilarity in the nervous system. Is it possible to define these peculiarities of nervous organisation?

In an ingenious essay on Temperaments recently published in a volume of lectures by Professor Henle, the celebrated anatomist of Göttingen, this difference is connected with the presence and absence of a certain tonus in the sensory nerves. It is known that the motor fibres of the nervous system are in a permanent state of stimulation called tonus. Similarly Henle supposes that the sensory fibres, previously to external stimulation, have in a robust nervous organism a certain measure of internal stimulation. As a consequence of this, he reasons, such a constitution would experience a higher degree of excitation from any given external stimulus than one destitute of this degree of tonus.

It seems impossible, in the present state of our physiological knowledge, even in the light of Henle's valuable hypothesis, to assign the precise relation of the scale of temperaments determined by the degree of emotional excitability in general, and the scale constituted by the degree of special sensibility to pleasure and to pain. That each exists seems certain. That physical counterparts of each may be reached, I do not doubt. Even now, we may vaguely conceive how an organ may vary either in the degree of its activity in general, or in the relative intensity of its different

functions. Yet any attempt to assign the connection between these would be premature.[1]

I am disposed to regard this contrast of emotional temperament as the deepest psychological ground of the opposing beliefs of the optimist and pesimist. It is plain that if this contrast exists it must affect first of all the actual value of life. Two persons, one of whom is much more sensitive to pleasure and much less sensitive to pain than the other, will obviously, under like external circumstances, experience very different amounts of happiness and misery. Further, if, as I am ready to allow, the quantities of joy and sorrow in human life, as determined by external conditions, frequently approximate, it follows that a difference of temperament such as I have described might of itself suffice to give an opposite value to a similar order of life-events, making it positive to one person, negative to another.

This difference of temperament has, however, a further effect. Not only does it alter the thing to be estimated, it

[1] Henle (*op. cit.*) does not recognise any contrast of temperament reposing on unequal sensibility to pleasure and pain. In this he appears to follow Lotze, in opposition to Kant, Johannes Müller, and others. According to this view the melancholic temperament differs from the sanguine, not in a leaning to one kind of feeling, but in a disposition to deep and persistent feeling generally. Henle seems to attribute the gloominess of this cast of mind to a relative weakness of voluntary as compared with emotional movement, owing to which it has to dispense with the alleviating and beneficial results of voluntary movements (as clenching the hands) in pain. This seems to me very inadequate as an explanation of all that is meant by the unhappy temperament. I would admit that persistence of mind—both as to feelings and ideas—may greatly favour a gloomy view of things when either a special leaning to painful feeling exists, or when the dominant effect of external circumstances is a depressing one; but it does not suffice of itself to explain, for example, why men may tend to gloom even in the midst of favourable surroundings.

affects the judgment in relation to the object. This will be seen by a moment's reference to the action of this bias as described above.

Special sensibility to pleasure shows itself in a readiness to conceive and dwell on pleasurable experiences rather than painful. Now, everybody's judgment of life really rests on a vague representation of the most impressive and abiding aspects of his experience. Just as the disposition to enjoy leads to a selection of pleasurable objects and events in a retrospect of any small section of life, so it will lead to a selection of ingredients of good rather than of evil in a review of life as a whole. In this way the judgment of life formed by a person of happy temperament will be even more favourable than the experiences themselves, though these have already been made favourable by the play of the same emotional forces. The same line of remark clearly applies to the case of the unhappy temperament.

Optimism and pessimism, then, have their deepest psychological roots in differences of sensibility. Yet these are not the only internal factors. Other mental influences co-operate to turn the judgment in this or that direction.

We will first glance at a mental force which appears to be closely connected with the emotional difference just dwelt on—namely, that of volition. What is popularly called a happy temperament, very frequently involves not only a natural emotional inclination to enjoyment, but also a powerful volitional tendency to the same. I assume here that all volition has for its end the increase of pleasure or the decrease of pain. It is clear, then, that a difference in volitional energy must affect the amounts of enjoyment and suffering realised. This side of the unhappy and happy

temperament has already been touched in the discussion of the conditions of happiness. A word or two here will suffice to show the bearing of volition on the internal factor of pleasure and pain.

Volition may modify to some extent a primary sensation of pleasure or pain. People vary immensely in their capacity of enduring pain; and this results not only from difference of sensibility, but also from inequality of volitional power. What is the exact mental process in this endurance is not, perhaps, very clear. Something seems to be done by an energetic excitation of certain voluntary muscles, which not only counteracts the bodily expression of pain, but seems to act as a counter excitation, and a diversion of the mental energies. Again, a present pain may be consciously diminished by a strong volitional direction of the processes of attention and imagination. This may be effected in one of two ways. We may seek to engage our consciousness with something wholly unconnected with the pain; that is, to divert our minds from it. If this is not possible, we may appreciably lessen the intensity of the feeling by looking at it, so to speak, through the medium of a pre-existing imagination. Thus, when about to undergo a surgical operation, a man of powerful will may to some extent bring himself to believe, not only beforehand, but even at the time, that it is a trifling and contemptible matter. It is evident that by a similar process volition may serve to enhance the intensity and value of a present pleasure.

It follows, further, that in all the pleasures and pains of perception, imagination, &c., where the mind is not subjected to a present irremovable sensation, the exercise of volition will serve still more powerfully to transform the natural scale

of pleasure and pain, as it would exist in the absence of volition.

It appears, then, that strength of volition is equivalent to a natural emotional affinity of mind for pleasure. Consequently, what is known as the happy temperament may often be the result of these forces combined. Similarly, the unhappy temperament may repose on a feebleness of will, coupled with an emotional leaning to pain. It seems fairly certain that these co-operating influences frequently co-exist in the same individuals. As a rule, perhaps, the joyous mind is also the energetic mind, the gloomy mind the feeble.

Yet there are many exceptions to this rule. It seems to be a fact of common observation that a special sensibility to pain may be neutralised and overpowered by a robust will.[1] There are cases, too, in which we may see that a happy life is secured much more by a healthy play of will than by a low degree of sensibility to pain. Goethe may be quoted as an example of such a happy volitional constitution.

This complicated relation between the two forms of the happy and of the unhappy temperament seems to be borne out by what little is known of the physiological basis of the two. Energy of will is, doubtless, connected with some quality of the higher motor centres of the brain, together, probably, with the muscles and the motor nerves connecting these with the centres. Now, it seems reasonable that, since the nervous system is but one complex organ, a natural condition of vigour of the sensory elements should, as a rule, go with a similar state of the motor structures. At the same time, since these two regions are two well-differentiated

[1] The case of Rahel von Varnhagen has already been mentioned. To this name I may add those of Dr. Johnson and Harriet Martineau.

halves of the nervous system, it is intelligible that one may readily be developed to a point of greater vigour than the other, and so a healthy state of the motor centres be occasionally found along with an unhealthy condition of the sensory ones.[1]

These peculiarities of volitional energy must, it is clear, like those of emotional disposition, tend to alter both the actual value of the person's experience, and (in a still larger measure) the judgment which he passes on this experience. A readiness to conceive, and to select for reflection, pleasurable elements rather than painful will produce its effect when the person takes a survey of life as a whole, and so he will be apt to think more favourably of it even than it actually presents itself in the momentary realisation of its successive parts. In other words, this rapid play of the volitional energies as directed to the processes of thought and imagination will show itself in the form of a quasi-instinctive *wish* to think well of life, both in its parts and as a whole.[2]

On the other hand, however, a lack of volitional energy will affect merely the value of the person's experience, and his judgment only so far as it is determined by the reality. In the mere absence of volitional force there is nothing to

[1] Mr. Bain points out, in his interesting work 'On the Study of Character,' that, since the energy of the nervous system is a limited quantity, the highest degrees of development of the sensory and emotional functions are incompatible with like degrees of development of the active functions. This important observation does not, however, tell against the co-existence of the happy emotional and the volitional temperament —within certain limits at least—but simply against that of the highly emotional and the highly volitional or active.

[2] The familiar observation that we are apt to believe what we wish seems to rest both on an emotional and a volitional tendency to dwell on pleasurable ideas.

impel a person to think worse of his experience than it is in reality.[1] When, therefore, pessimism shows itself in a mind of this temper, we must say either that the actual experience through the want of transforming volition is an excess of evil, or, what is more probable, that absence of will here co-exists with the emotional leaning to pain.

Let us now pass to a number of special emotional influences which frequently co-operate with these radical peculiarities of temperament in supporting the opposed views of life here discussed. They do not, for the most part, affect the judgment of life by first affecting the value of experience itself. They rather act as forces directly deflecting belief towards one of the two poles optimism and pessimism. With every mode of feeling a certain order of ideas and beliefs is consonant; and there are various kinds of sentiment which in this way act as magnetic centres of attraction in relation to optimism or pessimism.

First of all, then, there appears to be a well-marked difference between the type of mind which is gentle, yielding, and tender, and that which is irritable, rebellious, and quarrelsome. The contrast is best seen, perhaps, in the different ways in which people are wont to endure pain. To some persons pain is disturbing; it is something to rebel against; it calls forth the peculiar feeling of bitterness. To others, again, it is borne quietly—not, however, through any exertion of volition, but through the flow of an alleviating current of feeling known as tenderness.[2]

[1] If a person is already disposed to think ill of life, such an absence of active energy would no doubt lead him to regard its evil as incurable. Of this effect I shall have to speak presently.

[2] There are thus four clearly distinguished modes of accepting inevitable pain; (1) with a flow of tender feeling, leading to passive resignation; (2) with volitional endurance, and consequent diminution of its intensity;

This contrast is clearly at the basis of the antithesis between the affectionate and the quarrelsome disposition. It affects, however, the person's attitude of mind, not only towards others, but also towards all the external sources of pleasure and pain.[1] A large flow of tender feeling leads to a gentle, resigned view of the sources of misery, and to a grateful contemplation of the sources of happiness. On the other hand, a disposition to bitterness of feeling shows itself in the person's habitual attitude towards his inanimate surroundings. There is a tendency to rebel against events, to view things as hostile, and to take up a permanent posture of angry defiance in relation to the whole of one's environment.

This difference must, it is obvious, affect the value of the individual experience. The worth of a pain which is accepted in a resigned and friendly spirit, and suffused, so to speak, with a flow of tender emotion, differs widely from that of a like pain which galls and vexes the mind. It is pretty evident, indeed, that this difference frequently combines with and so complicates the contrast of the happy and the unhappy temperament already defined.[2]

(3) with total prostration of mind, leading to feeble complaint; and (4) with bitterness and defiance, leading to angry denunciation. The first two are clearly related to the optimistic, the second two to the pessimistic order of mind. When the pain is over, its ideal persistence is discouraged both by a volitional control of attention, and also by a strong disposition to laughter, which is wont to transform personal ill as soon as it is over into a source of after-mirth.

[1] This fact clearly points to the primitive mode of viewing objects and events as ordered by wills other than our own. All of us, even those who do not formulate their beliefs in a theological form, are wont to feel and to act as believers in the causation of events by conscious beings.

[2] One is half disposed to assume some physiological link connecting the unhappy temperament and the irritable cast of mind. This is suggested by the common increase of vexation with that of suffering when

At the same time, this contrast serves in a still larger measure to sway the belief men entertain respecting the value of the world. The habit of regarding things with tenderness and kindly complacency of feeling naturally leads to a favourable view of the totality of things —that is, to optimism; on the other hand, the disposition to resent and to resist leads as naturally to the conception of the world as inimical and so bad—that is, to pessimism.

It is to be noticed that in the case of this last type of mind a positive gratification is derived from launching out, so to speak, in idea against the constitution of things. Even if the man of rebellious temper cannot carry on actual warfare against so immobile a foe as the world about him, he may reap a satisfaction from heaping on it defiant and contemptuous speech. Consequently, to persons of this temperament pessimism presents itself as something grateful and satisfying.

Let us now pass to another class of influences, namely, those involved in the difference between the active and the sluggish or indolent temperament. This is a point closely related to that of volitional energy, though not identical with it. There seems to be, as I have observed, an instinctive disposition to action, prior to, and independently of, volition; and though this serves as a starting-point for volition itself, it is not co-extensive with it. Like every other instinctive impulse, a disposition to movement and action may

mental tone fails us. The characteristic of this 'irritability' is a tendency to an explosive and discordant kind of movement, which is decidedly injurious and intensifies rather than alleviates the suffering. It might possibly be connected with a certain morbid condition of the higher motor centres (those of voluntary innervation); and, if so, we could understand its frequent co-existence with a mental condition reposing on a morbid state of the sensory centres.

conflict with volition. A vigorous child is often foolishly inclined to action and has to learn to check the propensity.

Now differences in the quantity of this active impulse will have an appreciable effect on the judgment of life's value. In the first place, a full flow of vigorous activity is decidedly opposed to pessimism in all its forms, and favourable to a certain kind of optimism. Active impulse requires vent; and utter pessimism, by shutting all doors of activity must be repugnant to the mind richly endowed with this impulse. On the other hand, it encourages and sustains belief in action, and is a bias to a hopeful view of human endeavour and a firm belief in the indefinite improvability of things. It is thus a direct promoter of what I have called the practical form of optimism, the doctrine that we may reach good by dint of voluntary exertion.

Let us now glance at the effect of an opposite condition, inactivity, that is, a decided disinclination to movement and exertion. Will this invariably lead to pessimism? Certainly not. If this indolence co-exists with a happy or complacent emotional disposition, it will directly sustain that extreme passive form of optimism which pronounces all things good as they are.

If, however, this indolence goes with an unhappy disposition the effect will be a contrary one. The disinclination to exert oneself will combine to uphold the view that life is *unalterably* bad. And thus we find as a matter of fact that men often drift into pessimism under the influence of weariness and distaste for further exertion. In such a case, I conceive, the doctrine is positively grateful and consolatory. However the repugnance to action arises, whether from innate sluggishness or from subsequent exhaustion of active energy, it thus serves as a bias to pessimism. It seems to

me that the quiescence preached by Schopenhauer, after the example of all mystics and quietists, distinctly presents this side of pessimism, its grateful and soothing character in view of life's precarious labour and toil.

We will now pass to one or two narrower emotional influences which distinctly favour pessimism. These may be regarded as a rough set-off against the force of volitional energy, which, as we saw, exerts an influence only in one of the two opposed directions.

Pessimism is the natural outcome of the carping, fault-finding disposition. This variety of temper involves, besides that fundamental irritability and quarrelsomeness of disposition already referred to, the co-operation of the sentiment of power. To perceive the defects of our dwelling-place is to set ourselves above it, to prove the superiority of our conception to the actual object before us. By how much, one wonders, would the amount of human criticism be diminished if men no longer derived from the process any agreeable feeling of intellectual elevation. And this critical and condemnatory spirit can address itself to the arrangements of the inanimate world no less than to the work of one's fellow-beings. Even when there is no distinct recognition of a Demiurgus behind the fabric, it is possible to gain this species of satisfaction by imagining how much better we should have put things together than we find them actually combined.[1]

Again, although all men dislike pain itself, most men like the credit of bearing it. There is in human nature a good deal of the impulse to martyrise oneself at a reason-

[1] It is worth remarking that this critical and destructive habit of mind, being of great use to society, is one extremely well fitted to be developed in excess. To this side of the subject I shall return presently.

able actual cost for the sake of the flattering sense of desert which follows. Now nothing, surely, can be better fitted to bring us the sweets of martyrdom than the pessimist's conception of life. According to this, we are hopelessly enchained by the very nature of things, and all our struggles to get free from misery are destined to be futile. In truth, pessimism flatters a man by presenting him with a portrait of himself, in which he appears as another 'Prometheus vinctus' suffering tortures from the hand of the cruel Zeus-Pater, the World-all, which begot and holds us, yet bearing up and resisting in proud defiance. The representation is, one must confess, sufficiently captivating, and one can hardly wonder that so many welcome it. Pessimism enables its adherent to pose as some wronged and suffering divinity, to the admiration of himself at least, if not of spectators round about him.

I do not mean that the ambition to wear the crown of suffering is always of this half-hearted sort. It is a real and intense form of this impulse which has helped to sustain ascetic practices in all times. To many minds the full and certain consciousness of endurance, of a voluntary self-denial, of a spontaneous renunciation of the world (*Entsagung*), brings a delicious emotion, and when this is reinforced by religious hopes, it becomes a source of the highest emotional exaltation.[1] Hence this impulse has led to the actual acceptance of sharp and protracted suffering. At the same time it has encouraged among its subjects a belief in the unreality of earthly enjoyment. In truth, as Schopenhauer appears to imply, such renunciation would be impossible to frail human nature, even when aided by religious

[1] It is pretty certain that this ecstatic condition of feeling is directly aided by the reduction of the bodily strength.

hope, were it not for this increasing doubt and final disbelief with respect to the reality of earthly good. This seems to be the true relation of asceticism to pessimism.

So far I have spoken of the individual as judging the value of his own world only. But it is evident that the opposing tendencies here spoken of will, to a large extent, colour his views of the life of mankind in general. We are all apt to make individual experience the measure of things which lie beyond it. We reason that what is true for ourselves must be true for others also. Hence, the man who, owing to his peculiar cast of temperament, is specially impressed with the facts of joy or of suffering in his own life will naturally extend this emotionally-coloured conception to the lives of men generally. Thus the melancholic man will naturally see the world to be dark and dreary for others, while the gay and buoyant spirit will environ his fellows with a world of sunshine and gladness, similar to that which he frames for himself.

Nor is this wholly a matter of hasty and uncorrected inference. The very tendency of a feeling to harmonise with itself the ideas and beliefs of the mind will assist in bringing about this result. The man whose habitual frame of mind is joyous or depressed will naturally adopt ideas respecting others which fit in and accord with this temper. Thus the gloomy man will be disposed to entertain gloomy ideas of mankind in general, as harmonising with his prevailing shade of feeling. Similarly with the joyous and hopeful temperament.[1]

It is to be added, however, that the form which a man's

[1] The obvious exception to this is that men, when given to magnifying their own good or ill fortune, are disposed to under-estimate that of their fellow-creatures, in order to accentuate by contrast.

universal as distinguished from individual optimism or pessimism will take depends to some extent on the feelings he habitually cherishes towards others. Thus, for example, one who is disposed (by force of his happy temperament) to look on mankind at large as happy, and who at the same time is of a highly affectionate nature, will naturally give to his optimism the form of a belief in human excellence. He will be one of those who are apt to see the favourable side of human nature, to tone down its blemishes, and to be confident of man's natural love of virtue, of his capacity to discover truth and to reach good, and in general of all that makes for human dignity, beauty, and worth. On the other hand, a person who is comparatively destitute of wide social feelings, but at the same time possesses strong æsthetic sensibilities, would rather conceive the happiness of mankind as a part of the general harmony of things.[1]

Still more striking is the effect of the presence or absence of social sentiment on the forms of universal pessimism. A man of deep and strong sympathies would naturally clothe his conviction of the misery of mankind in the shape of a threnode, or plaintive lament. In the case of such a person the most natural mood in view of men's incurable ills, would appear to be that of kindly pity (*Mitleid*). This is, indeed, the common poetical form of pessimism, and recommends itself to the imaginative and sensitive mind through its very pathetic and tragic aspects.[2]

On the other hand, let the pessimist be, as we have seen he may easily be, of an unsociable and antagonistic disposi-

[1] It is to be expected, as I have hinted, that an optimistic disposition will commonly include a tendency to indulge a kindly and complacent feeling towards others, since this sentiment harmonises so well with the general disposition to happy feeling.

[2] See the quotation from Leopardi's letter, *supra*, p. 27.

tion, and what form will his view of human misery most probably assume? Clearly that of the contemptuous misanthrope. The failure of men to attain happiness will strike such a one, not on its pathetic or tragic side, but rather on its cruelly ironical side, as a supreme manifestation of human feebleness, ignorance, and insignificance. He will view mankind, so to speak, *ab extra*, as though he had no part or lot in their fate, but were some complacent deity, safely enthroned above the vain futile turmoil. Instead of embracing men with himself in the sacred sense of a common destiny of suffering, he detaches them from himself, and regards them from a hostile point of view.[1]

It is curious to note the part played by the impulses of laughter in the production of these opposing views of human life. The lighter and gayer modes of hilarity are clearly favourable to optimism. In truth, the happy temperament seems to include a disposition to overflow in genial mirth, and this element has, as I have remarked, a bearing on the value of life, since it tends to diminish all its lesser ills. The impulse of a gladsome nature to laugh away all recollection of pain is no insignificant factor in the sources of happiness.

Laughter, however, in its more specialised form as a sense of the ludicrous, has for its proper object other conscious beings, and so its influence is seen most distinctly in the judgment of the collective life. On the one hand this sentiment is plainly wont to select blemishes rather than

[1] It is plain from this that the irascible and misanthropic spirit may be a powerful influence disposing a man to believe in human failure and misery, even when the causes which lead to a belief in the badness of one's individual world are absent. But, in fact, the misanthropic tendency is commonly, if not uniformly, conjoined with that very irritability of temper which underlies the first view of the world as evil for the individual himself.

excellences, slightly derogatory rather than dignified aspects of character and life; and so far it would seem to make for pessimism. On the other hand, however, as a genial and pleasurable sentiment it commonly combines with kindly feeling in reducing the faults of mankind; and so it tends to exclude all grave condemnation of others. To this extent, therefore, it sustains optimism.

One may say, then, that a man endowed with plenty of genial laughter and kindly humour will on the whole lean to optimism, even though to a somewhat subdued variety of the belief. While he sees the disadvantages of life, the failure of effort, and the uncomely side of human nature, his quick sense of the grotesque and ludicrous will serve to dissolve these defects, so to speak, into airy nothings—that is to say, they will exist for his eye only as amusing trifles which make human life a comedy, it is true, yet in doing so add to its spectacular worth; and which, though making human nature a shade or two less dignified, render it more lovable.

Very different is the effect when the impulses of laughter are of the more biting and contemptuous kind. These clearly ally themselves to the misanthropic view of mankind. To one who habitually indulges in the laughter of sarcasm the spectacle of human life is no light harmless comedy, but rather a wild and lawless orgie. It presents itself as the outbreak of stupendous folly, the tumultuous action of degrading impulses. The man who seeks a main gratification of life in this harsh and unfeeling laughter will be a pessimist after the pattern of Mephistopheles.

It may be well in concluding this brief and rough outline of the mental peculiarities underlying optimism and pessimism to point out that, with all their differences, they alike involve an interest in life. The pessimist who asserts

that the world is bad is so far concerned about the world that he takes the trouble to gauge its value. Not only so, pessimism in its fully developed form manifests itself as a bitter denunciation of life or as a plaintive outcry against evil. This shows that the pessimist no less than the optimist cares that the world should be good. Accordingly, both of the beliefs presuppose a certain degree of sensibility, even though this sensibility falls into one of two one-sided varieties. And thus it may be said that the serious and hearty forms of pessimism and optimism alike rest on a strong feeling for the desirable aspects of life, a certain eagerness of mind in relation to the good and the evil which fortune may bring. The pessimist clings to life in a sense—that is, to an ideal life other than the actual—and thus betrays the presence of a strong instinctive desire to secure pleasure and to avoid pain.

It is necessary, therefore, to set the optimist and pessimist alike in opposition to the moral indifferentist or nihilist, who does not care to form an opinion on life's worth, who seems to have but little sensibility whether for pleasure or pain, and whose desires are feeble—a type of mind popularly known as the cool, sluggish, or 'phlegmatic' temperament. Of course, a perfectly indifferent mind is a pure fiction. No one is consistently careless about the complexion of his life; only it may be said that in proportion as emotional excitability and sensibility are low, men approach this neutral point.[1]

[1] The amount of one's general interest in life may, perhaps, be said to be a function of three variables: (*a*) intensity of feeling; (*b*) strength of memory and imagination, and (*c*) energy of active impulse. It is to be added that the attitude of the moral indifferentist must be distinguished from that of a man who is alive to the importance of the question of the value of life, but who is unable on intellectual grounds to adopt any par-

It follows that the contrast between the indifferent and the eager type of mind crosses that between the hopeful and the gloomy. Thus a complete scale of the optimistic and pessimistic moods might be represented by the geometrical symbol of a plane having two dimensions. In this plane imagine two co-ordinate axes to be drawn at right angles to one another, and let one of these stand for the mean judgment of the value of life in respect of the degree of its favourableness (or unfavourableness), and the other for the mean judgment in respect of the degree of interest in the question. Then any particular estimate of life would be indicated by some one point in the surface, and the character of this estimate would be determined by the perpendicular distance of this point (in a positive or negative direction) from each of the axes.[1]

To give an illustration of the mode in which both the optimistic and pessimistic moods shade off towards the

ticular estimate of the world. It may be said, perhaps, that optimism, pessimism, and indifferentism in the moral region would correspond roughly to affirmation, negation, and sceptical indecision in the intellectual or speculative domain.

[1] The geometrical illustration of a plane was suggested to me by Wundt's employment of it in describing the twofold variations of tone-sensations, namely, in pitch and in intensity ('Physiologische Psychologie,' p. 365). There seems, indeed, to be a close analogy between the two cases, since height of tone answers roughly to degree of favourableness in the judgment, while strength or loudness is clearly similar to degree of interest. Of course this illustration must not be applied too rigorously. It is plain that we cannot mark off degrees of favourableness (or unfavourableness) in judgment with the same precision with which we can distinguish degrees of intensity among tones. The reader who cares to work out this geometrical idea will find that our plane of temperament is a limited surface with an irregular form. Thus, for example, its width in the direction answering to minimum interest will be very small, since here there are comparatively few distinguishable degrees of favourableness.

neutral point of indifference, I may observe that the light-hearted and passive forms of optimism which spring up in the absence of powerful active tendencies, the indolent contentment with life which easy-going people are apt to adopt, come very near the neutral condition of belief. This is true, too, of the easy resignation of the *soi-disant* pessimist who likes to indulge in a not too depressing cynicism, and is wont to regard the drama of human experience as an unexciting comedy. A similar remark applies to the sentimental cultivation of the *Weltschmerz* by the voluptuary who has become *blasé* and lost relish for life. All these conditions of mind lack the force of a profound capability of feeling which characterises the hearty pessimist, and approach the mental state of the indifferentist.[1] This relation is but one illustration of the familiar fact that all distinguishable mental temperaments shade off into one another by the most gradual differences.

Although I have hitherto been speaking only of an individual bias to optimism and pessimism, it is to be observed that quite similar dispositions may be attributed to nations and races. Thus the same society may, like the same individual, pass through stages of feeling favourable to optimism and to pessimism. At times the spirit of an age is hopeful and active; at other times, there dominates a sense of weariness, a critical and condemnatory tone of sentiment. These changes are obviously connected with variations in external conditions, and so will have to be referred to again presently.

[1] I am indebted to Dr. Waldstein, who has recently come from Germany, and who has made a special study of German pessimism in its social aspects, for the observation that whereas the disappointed German, with his strong idealism and his deep feeling, gravitates to an earnest pessimism, the disappointed Frenchman more commonly lapses into the lighter mood of cynical indifference.

No less manifest are the permanent differences among different races with respect to the habitual view of life. Just as there are happy and hopeful, gloomy and despondent individuals, so there are races which may be called light-hearted and joyous, while there are others which by comparison appear grave, sombre, and melancholic. This contrast of race involves, I doubt not, the antithesis between the volatile or changeable, and the persistent or constant temper. Yet, in addition, we must, I think, admit great differences among races with respect to the relative disposition to enjoyment and to gloomy complaint. The English people, for example, are said to take their pleasures sadly; and certainly, as compared with some southern peoples, they seem on the whole to have a low degree of the capacity of pure passive enjoyment. It is naturally to be expected that optimism and pessimism will find soils more or less appropriate among peoples marked with these opposite tendencies of feeling.

So much as to the first factor in the optimist's and pessimist's belief, the influence of emotional disposition. Let us now turn to the second factor—namely, the external circumstances which afford the apparent logical basis of these conflicting beliefs. As I have said, feeling would not suffice to create these beliefs, were there no facts to lend them a seeming support.[1]

In the first place, then, individual experience varies; and it is indisputable, I think, that some men may realise an unhappy life just as others may reach a happy one.

[1] 'Our judgments upon life are nothing fixed and unalterable. They present themselves first of all as influenced by the individual's own fate, and they mould themselves according to the favour or disfavour of place and time.'—Dühring ('Der Werth des Lebens').

Anything which tends to ruin one's individual hopes and aspirations clearly supplies a fragmentary objective basis for pessimism; and, in proportion as we are surrounded by circumstances and events which annoy us, disappoint our hopes, and sadden our hearts, we shall find pessimism plausible and credible. The unavoidable misfortunes of life, which stagger the spirit and fill it with lamentation, the disappointments men bring on themselves by a foolish conception of happiness, by unwise ambition or excessive indulgence, the presence of a world which has lost its flimsy charm for a quickly sated mind, all this must, it is clear, have an effect in transforming life into something empty and dreary for the particular person concerned.

It is plain, too, that such events will have as a further effect a tendency to produce the gloomy tone of mind, and so to render pessimism not only logically believable, but also acceptable as consonant with the person's feelings. In much the same way, of course, an accumulation of fortunate circumstances and events will have a tendency to raise the average temper of mind to the pitch of a hopeful and confident gladness.

Among the circumstances of the individual life which vary and so encourage one of the opposed forms of belief respecting the value of life, are social conditions. As these are, on the whole, happy or wretched, they must, it is certain, affect the individual's judgment. Not only will they alter to his eye the value of his own life, they will modify that of others' experiences as well. When he comes to sum up the worth of existence generally, his judgment will thus be affected by the character of the social circumstances of his country and age.

Yet here we reach influences which constitute factors

not only in the environment of the individual, but also in that of the society; that is to say, circumstances which modify the value of the aggregate life of the community. Let us for a moment contemplate this larger side of the subject.

The varying moods through which the social consciousness passes will, it is clear, be largely swayed by changes in the social experience. When circumstances are adverse, when social and political abuses abound, when the pressure of physical need is severe, and when the channels of happy and fruitful action are obstructed, there is clearly a reason for the acceptance of a gloomy view of things by the community as a whole. On the other hand, when obstructions are removed, impeded energies liberated, and rich prospects of attainment opened up, there is as good a reason for the society's setting the worth of its collective life at a high point in the scale.

It is to be remarked here, also, that with the change in the environment there goes as a consequence a change in the tone of sentiment and the temper of mind. A multiplication of social evils naturally produces a sadness of mind which is tantamount to a disposition to lamentation and to despair. On the other hand, unwonted social prosperity encourages the hopeful temper of spirit. In this way changes in the environment affect the common judgment in two ways; first of all, by altering the value of the object; secondly, by producing a prevailing mode of feeling favourable to one kind of belief.

I may add, that the differences traceable in the temperaments of different peoples and races already referred to may to some extent clearly be connected with external factors. Of these, climate is certainly one of the most impor-

tant. It seems obvious that the difference between a climate which in the main woos to inactivity and leisure by filling these with luxurious sensations, and one which rather acts as a gad-fly in driving men away from repose to exertion, must have an effect on a people's way of looking at life. Those to whom hours of idle thought are filled with pleasurable feeling will be apt to think well of life as it is, while those who have to forego these long tracts of grateful indolence will take a less favourable view of life, regarding it, at best, as something which calls for their most arduous endeavours at improvement.

From all this it appears that while, as we have seen, variations of the internal factors commonly involve accompanying variations in the quality of the object to be estimated, changes in the external factors (whether of the individual or of the social life) have as their frequent effect a change in the emotional disposition.[1] It follows that the two sets of factors are very closely connected, and that their influence can only be studied apart within certain limits.

We will now pass to certain constant facts in human

[1] I say 'frequent,' because the force of internal factors, if telling in an opposite direction, may more than counteract the effect of the external change. Take, for example, the undaunted spirit of Henry V. under pressing danger :—

> 'There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
> Would men observingly distil it out;
> For our bad neighbour makes us early stirrers,
> Which is both healthful and good husbandry.'
>
> —*King Henry V.*, act iv., scene 1.

It is to be added that this effect of circumstances on mental temper is greatly aided by a certain tenacity and persistence of mind. Where impressions act slowly but lastingly, a permanent effect on temper is more probable. On the other hand, in the more volatile, changeable, and fluctuating cast of mind such a lasting effect would be much less likely.

life and the world which serve to supply an apparent basis for optimism and pessimism, even when there are no special features in the individual's own life or in that of the country and age which lie immediately under his observation to draw his judgment in either of the opposite directions. These facts may be supposed to have had weight with the more philosophical forms of the beliefs, though it is probable that philosophers, no less than other men, have their intellectual conceptions most powerfully influenced by the facts of their own personal experience.

In the first place, then, every unprejudiced person must admit that both the good and the evil of the world are abundant and manifold, extending to all departments of our existence. Consequently, when there is a predisposition to select and to dwell on either order of facts, ample material will certainly be found.

Again, our pleasures and pains are closely connected as opposites modes of one variety of sensibility. They are rooted to a large extent in the same objects; they meet us in the same directions of activity. Accordingly, where there is a disposition to accentuate the one element and to pass by the other, this result is facilitated by the fact of the contiguity of good and evil. Were our pleasures and pains wholly disconnected, lying in totally unlike regions of experience, scattered promiscuously here and there, it would be much harder to fall into the error of concentrating attention on the one and of overlooking the other. But since they lie so near together our very attention to the one blinds us to the presence of the other. Thus, for example, a man who is by temperament an optimist will be apt to overlook the disadvantages of a particular profession or social relation just because they lie, so to speak, in the

same line of vision with, and so are covered by, the advantages belonging to this particular object.

Yet once more, the very same event, the very same experience, may be, and often is, at once good and ill according to the way in which we regard it. Whenever the elements of happiness and of misery are causally connected—in other words, whenever there presents itself a complex event or class of events, which is made up of agreeable and disagreeable parts, there is an opportunity of conceiving the whole either as good or evil according to the natural preference of the mind. That is to say, we may either make the favourable ingredient the central and dominant point, and look at the unfavourable element simply as a drawback to this good; or we may erect the evil into the chief fact and regard the good as a subordinate feature. To take a familiar instance: it is found that sentiments of benevolence often lead men to injure others by indiscriminate almsgiving. There are two ways of regarding this fact. Whereas the man who is naturally a pessimist would say, 'What a *pity* that so excellent a motive should lead to such ill consequences!' a man of the opposite temperament would as naturally exclaim, 'It is *fortunate* that what in itself is evil may be the means of bringing into play a worthy and noble impulse.'[1] In this curiously checkered life of ours there is ample opportunity of thus giving a

[1] An illustration of the twofold way of looking at such events was recently offered me in a daily newspaper. The Bishop of Winchester is reported to have said in a recent address, 'that while lamenting the unhappy divisions of the Church, there was some palliation in the fact that they were the outcome of religious zeal.' (See 'Daily News' of February 5 last.) To most people, perhaps, the fact would take the form of a regrettable incident. 'It is a pity,' they would say, 'that religious zeal should run into such unlovely excess.'

double value to events by looking either at the good factor as a compensation for the evil, or at the latter as a blemish and a drawback in relation to the former. This is, indeed, nothing but the contrast between the optimist's and the pessimist's view of the coexistence of evil and good in the world as a whole, showing itself in relation to details.

But, again, a single event, even when not presenting distinct factors of good and evil, may assume one of two opposite values according to the idea or standard to which it is referred. We measure all value by relations, and an object which has no value in relation to certain things may acquire such by being set in relation to some other thing. For example, the condition of a convalescent patient may be an evil from the point of view of a healthy man, and yet appear as a positive good to the subject of this condition, to whom it means escape from severe pain, and movement towards perfect health. There being this possibility of giving so different a relative value to our experiences, it is often very difficult to determine the fixed or 'absolute'[1] value of any event or condition of feeling, that is to say, its value as determined by the one permanent standard of the zero-point of emotional indifference. Thus, as I have hinted, a man may easily fall into the error of counting many of his quieter and less obtrusive pleasures—for example, those of moderately interesting intellectual occupation—as negative quantities, by contrasting them with that degree of pleasurable excitement which he often experiences and which is what he commonly understands by the term pleasure.

In this way, too, whole groups of events and whole

[1] Of course, no value is really absolute. The true distinction is between constant and variable relative value, not between an absolute and a relative value.

sections of our life-experience may be differently estimated in relation to different standards, and thus the exact objective worth (as measured by one fixed standard) be disguised. A man who has entered on a career somewhat unwillingly is apt to fancy that it brings him no positive enjoyment, just because he habitually contrasts it with a kind of life which his imagination paints in much more glowing tints. So the value of life as a whole varies according to the ideal standard customarily kept before the mind. Owing to this circumstance, it may be said that the highly imaginative man is much more likely to fall into a pessimistic way of viewing things than a comparatively unimaginative one. That is to say, he is much more likely to judge actuality by a lofty and unattainable standard.

Finally, it is to be observed that the very relation of pleasure and pain, as contrasted states of feeling, affords an opening for each of the extreme views of life. As I have remarked, our pleasures and pains, though not, strictly speaking, always dependent on one another, owe much of their force to this fact of contrast. The best way to realise the full intensity of a present pleasure or pain is to imagine the opposite condition. Again, the most effectual means of securing an intense degree of pain or of pleasure is to introduce an opposite mode of feeling as an antecedent to the required state. Not only so, certain pleasures and pains (as for example, the enjoyments of repose and the pains of want) do undoubtedly depend on an opposed mode of feeling as their antecedent.

At first sight, indeed, this fact of the relative character of pleasure and pain might seem to be well fitted to keep us in mind of the mixed character of life. If pleasure is the opposite of pain, and if, as is said, we cannot fully know

a thing except in relation to its opposite, it would appear that this fact must serve as a warning-light repelling from the extreme theories of optimism and pessimism, rather than as a guide-post directing to the same. Yet, though it is not possible, in view of the relative nature of pleasure and pain, totally to ignore either factor, a man may easily be led by this very fact of relativity to ascribe to one of the contrasting terms a subordinate value, provided there is any pre-existing disposition to give special prominence to either of the opposed experiences. What is viewed as a contrast to another thing, and as frequently depending on this other thing as its antecedent, readily assumes the aspect of a mere escape from this first—that is to say, of something purely privative or negative, having no independent value of its own. And, as we have seen, both optimist and pessimist have sought to ground their doctrine on the relation of contrast between the two modes of feeling.

So much, then, as to the factors internal and external which support the optimistic and pessimistic views of life and the world as a whole. It is now to be added that in relation to the worth of progress, more special influences come in to strengthen these opposing tendencies. Let us look first of all at the special internal factors.

The optimist's overstatement of the benefits of progress is favoured not only by the hopeful, joyous temperament as a whole, but also by those feelings which lead us to magnify our own condition in comparison with that of our ancestors. It flatters our vanity to conceive ourselves as vastly superior in intelligence and resources to antiquity. Thus a strong self-confidence, especially if combined with a moderate inclination to contemn others as inferior to ourselves, will often help to sway a man's belief respecting

past progress in the optimistic direction. And when once past progress is viewed as a rapid process of emergence from a contemptible condition into one of dignity, a firm belief in the blessings of progress as a whole, is pretty sure to follow.[1]

On the side of pessimism, again, special emotional influences here rise into view. Men are disposed to underestimate progress through the action of all those feelings which transform the past into an object of reverential attachment. Most men are apt to overrate what is far off, to envelope the distant and obscure in a golden mist of their own creation. The pessimistic temperament will, it is plain, be peculiarly disposed to magnify the past as a mode of disparaging the present. Since the past is not only absent, but, unlike the future, over and done with, the eulogy of it is not only compatible with, but exactly answers to, the despondent cast of mind, inclined to view all that is real or within reach as worthless. Added to this, there is in certain minds, apart from any tendency to despondency, a strong feeling of veneration for antiquity; and when this sentiment is present there is clearly an influence making for an undue disparagement of past advance, and consequently of progress as a whole.

Let us now look at the external factors which influence this opposed way of estimating progress. It is obvious, to begin with, that our knowledge of the past is of the scantiest. Even that of recent historical periods is very meagre, inas-

[1] It is clear that in the case of the practical politician the magnifying of the value of political agencies and of the changes to be realised in the future is greatly encouraged by a powerful disposition to action. Also it is sustained by a relatively strong love of novelty and change, and a relatively weak sentiment for what is customary and invested with associations.

much as chroniclers and historians have seldom troubled to record social conditions, even if the requisite statistical data can be said to have been obtainable at these times. It thus becomes singularly easy to lapse into error in the appreciation of the social condition of a by-gone age, and consequently in the comparative estimate of the present and the past. Evils which we are apt to regard as modern may, in fact, be old, though nobody in earlier times thought it worth while to record their existence. Similarly, with respect to certain supposed recently discovered advantages.

Again, if a man, confining himself to the conditions of contemporary society, seeks to arrive at a just view of its aggregate value he will find it exceedingly difficult. Our newspapers and our critical journals are much more careful to record and comment on the evils, abuses, and drawbacks of our social life than its blessings and advantages. A crime is a public act, and is duly chronicled in the reports of our law-courts: a deed of private generosity obtains no such notoriety. Political and social criticism, again, partly from the deeply-organised instinct of fault-finding already spoken of, partly from a sense of its paramount practical utility, devotes itself chiefly, if not exclusively, to the flaws and failures of social action, while its valuable results are passed over in silence. I conceive that owing to these circumstances there is a special facility offered to those who are previously disposed to take a gloomy view of contemporary social and political progress.[1]

[1] It may be said that since each successive generation agrees in thus making its defects conspicuous, the comparative estimates of a present and a past age will not be affected. This, however, is not so. Our knowledge, such as it is, of past conditions of society is derived, not from journals addressed to contemporaries, but from chronicles consciously directed to posterity. It is probable, therefore, that the motives of self-respect

Let us now glance back to see the results we have reached. Optimism and pessimism have been shown to be each natural under certain circumstances, internal and external. In a certain sense each may be said to be true, that is, to answer to the quality of particular individual or social experiences as conditioned both by variable external events and by internal disposition. Yet, so far as each doctrine is a sweeping generalisation based on a very narrow field of variable experience, it can clearly possess no logical value. How much less worthy of rational approbation does each view show itself to be when we are able to trace it to so large an extent to subjective sources of belief, to influences which deflect opinion from the point of actual experience![1]

Our examination of the subjective sources of optimism and pessimism appears, indeed, to justify the remark that the profession of these views is very often half-hearted and superficial. The facts of life are so manifestly opposed to the extreme forms of both doctrines that the upholders of these must, one fancies, except in rare circumstances, be vaguely aware of the discrepancy. And as a matter of subjective observation, many of us have probably caught ourselves under some exceptional emotional pressure drifting towards one of the extreme views of life, while the still small voice of sober sense was warning us against the folly.

While optimism and pessimism alike may thus be

and the wish to give a favourable impression of one's time would in most cases lead these early writers to present a too favourable picture of contemporary social conditions and events. At the same time, it is to be supposed that a scholarly recluse, deeply impressed with the violence, cruelty, and lawlessness of his age, might now and again drift into too dark a representation of the doings and manners of the period.

[1] The reader will see that I do not accept Lange's idea that optimism rests on an ideal impulse, pessimism on fact. Each, I conceive, is a product at once of impulse and of fact.

adopted without a firm intellectual grip, and in an indolent sentimental mood, pessimism appears to be specially liable to be consciously affected as something striking and distinguishing. Young people, especially, in a particular stage of intellectual development are very apt to indulge in a thin watery kind of cynicism, and to profess a superfine disgust for the rude facts of life. Such an attitude of mind answers, as we have seen, to certain emotional tendencies, while it has the further attraction of being an imposing spectacle to duller mortals. It may be hoped, then, with some reason, that only a small proportion of nominal pessimists are sincere and firm believers.

Again, the foregoing analysis leads to the conclusion that pessimism of the more sincere and hearty sort may be regarded in a large measure as a distinctly pathological phenomenon. Tracing it, as we have done, in its most pronounced form to a special sensibility to pain—that is, to a distinctly morbid symptom of the nervous system—we are able to give a rational ground for the view that it is susceptible of being greatly curbed and limited by a wise regard for the conditions of health both in ourselves and in others. If ever a complete science of health shall exist, and the deepest conditions of mental as well as bodily welfare be ascertained, we may, perhaps, without being Utopian, predict a period when the dreariest forms of pessimism will disappear together with the peculiarities of temperament which underlie and sustain them.

Once more, a hasty glance at the above enumeration of the factors of optimism and pessimism might lead one to a conclusion which would stultify our preceding attempt to discuss the objective value of life. A reader might urge that no such thing as a perfectly rational judgment on life as a

whole is attainable, since everybody is necessarily influenced to some extent, both by the character of his individual (and social) experience, as well as by certain peculiarities of disposition. The force of this objection I fully admit; and, though I have already tried to meet it in part, it may be worth while to consider it a little more fully in this place.

I would concede at once that no single individual reaches a perfectly calm and correct view of life in its totality, even of that part which is observable by him. Yet there may surely be some approximation to such a judgment. The wise man, to whom our appeal has so often been made, comes nearest an accurate conclusion in so far as he takes a wide and impartial view of all accessible facts; as he observes and studies other modes of life than his own; and as he reduces to a minimum the effects of passing impression and varying mood, by striking an average of his fluctuating opinions, and comparing this with the calm assurance of his most quiet hours.

But how, it may still be asked, can we be sure that we have eliminated in this case the permanent factor of individual temperament? Will not your wise man, by your own showing, be one who habitually seeks to dwell on the good and to overlook the evil of life? To this I would reply again, as I have already done: so far as temperament affects the quality of the experience itself, it does not need to be eliminated; it is a part of the very experience which is the object of estimation. It is only when, as a habit of viewing the bright side of things, it affects the judgment beyond this point that it can produce error. Now I do not deny that a slight error to the advantage of life is produced in such a case. The habit of recalling the favourable rather than the unfavourable ingredients of the past must tend,

it is clear, slightly to warp that recollection of events on which the person's judgment has to a large extent to be formed.

Yet the difficulty is not so formidable as it looks at first sight. Men of the calmest minds fitted to be the best judges are not uniformly thus biassed towards optimism. A man may have a keen perception for facts and yet not be practically wise in improving the conditions of his life. Nay, he may even be slightly biassed in the opposite direction. Consequently, if we take the opinions of a number of men most perfectly trained in observation and induction, we may be pretty certain of eliminating the personal error in the case. At least, this appears to be the closest approximation to an objective judgment attainable by us.

It is this consensus of the best opinions of the most competent minds which I have sought to reach in the foregoing discussion of the problem of life's value. If in doing this I have been unconsciously biassed by forces of individual temperament, I have little doubt that this source of error may afterwards be eliminated by further discussion.

To sum up, then, the results of our inquiry into the sources of optimism and pessimism, I think it must be admitted that each, so far as it gives itself out to be a just and accurate view of things, will alike be rejected by those concerned to regulate their beliefs by the amplest evidence attainable.

To this I would now add that, so far as each sets itself up as an adequate and exclusive doctrine of life, there seems to me to be little to choose between them on extra-logical grounds. Optimism is, no doubt, a better working creed than pessimism—at least, in the practical form that the world is as good as possible, provided we do our part. In

other respects they are much on a level. If optimism in some of its forms is irritating and incensing to our sense of justice and fact,[1] pessimism is repelling through its lachrymose weakness, its contemptible spiritlessness. If, as Mr. Leslie Stephen tells us, 'nothing is less poetical than optimism,'[2] the poetry of pessimism, if offered as our sole spiritual diet, would, one fancies, provide us with a very sorry meal. A healthy nature would soon recoil from a perpetual whining over life's sorrows.

If the foregoing analysis of the sources of optimism and pessimism is correct, we ought to be able by means of it to account for the origin of the most striking forms of these beliefs by a consideration of personal and social circumstances. Thus we should be able to trace the genesis of that pessimism which is here the especial object of our study. With respect to the personal problem herein involved, enticing though it is, I do not propose to say much in this place. In the case of the founder of modern pessimism the reader will be able, I think, by help of the slight account of the man supplied above, to find out for himself the forces of temperament which have led to the adoption of so dark and dismal a view of life. And those only moderately familiar with the lives of Byron, Heine, and

[1] 'It is hard to imagine a more execrable emotion than the complacent religiosity of the prosperous.'—J. Morley, 'Rousseau,' vol. i. p. 317.

[2] Optimism not only has a place in poetry, as the instinctive praise of the sources of good, it may even acquire a highly poetical character. Thus, for example, as a tenacious, invincible faith in final good, in spite of all signs to the contrary, it has in spite of its irrationality an impressive and even a noble aspect. It expresses in a striking form the vitality of an emotion which is on one side eminently natural, on another morally commendable.

'Oh, yet we hope that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill.'

Leopardi will need no guidance in tracing the influence of personal disposition and individual experience on the dominant view of the world.[1]

On the other hand, we cannot pass by the far more important social problem which contemporary pessimism presents to us. How is it that pessimism happens just now to be adopted by so large a number of persons as their life-creed? Modern pessimism shows itself on a little consideration to be no natural logical development of European thought. On the contrary, in spite of its attempt to graft itself on modern science, it is essentially an exotic in the soil of European philosophy. Its main source is thus seen to be social sentiment. It has been adopted as meeting a dominant emotional want of the age. Let us glance at it for a moment on this side.

It is much too soon to attempt an accurate and exhaustive analysis of the influences which have contributed to produce just now this particular temper of mind. No historical phenomenon can be understood by a spectator who still lacks the proper perspective of time; and pessimism has by no means ceased as yet to be a popular creed. It must suffice to point out in a conjectural way a few of the circumstances which seem to have played a part in this process.

Though pessimism is most rife in Germany, it is by no means confined to that country. Other nations, as Russia, appear to be deeply infected with the spirit, and Schopenhauer may claim his numerous admirers in France and in

[1] It has been said that all extreme pessimists have been persons who were isolated from social ties, and dominated by an anti-social temper of mind. Even Hartmann, shallow as I conceive his pessimism to be, appears, from the slight autobiography he gives us, to be no exception to the rule. He seems, during the early part of his life at least, to have accommodated himself with difficulty to his social surroundings.

England. It looks, then, as if the doctrine answered to certain general conditions of contemporary European sentiment. This feeling, so far as it exists, seems to be connected with a number of various influences. It is worth noting that philosophical pessimism treads on the heels of that vigorous manifestation of poetic pessimism which, as we have seen, marked the early part of the present century, the age of Byron, Leopardi, and Heine. Now this temper of the European mind seems to be accounted for partly as a form of intellectual cynicism, called forth by religious scepticism, and a sense of the hollowness of the last century optimism, partly as the depressing reaction after a period of extraordinary emotional tension, and of exalted confidence in ideal aims. In its earlier manifestations it was the apparent failure of a social and political ideal which brought about this state of despondency. In more recent years, the collapse of the extravagant aspirations and endeavours of certain æsthetic schools, has probably perpetuated, if it has not deepened, the pessimistic mood.

So far as we can judge of the dominant features of our own age there seems much just now to bend the sensitive mind in the pessimistic direction. The critical attrition of revered traditions is, and will be for a long time yet, keenly resented as a denudation of life of its crowning beauty and worth. Science, it is true, flourishes and progresses; yet it has not so far furnished to the mass of mankind any new inspiring ideas, any noble imaginative forms for their emotional aspirations. Then, too, the absence of new creative vigour in art, which is possibly more than a passing phenomenon, leaves men's propensities to enthusiasm unsatisfied in an æsthetic direction. To this one may add, that the

single art which seems to preserve sufficient vitality for new developments, namely, music, is one which lends itself in a peculiar way as an expression to the pessimistic temper.[1] Once more, the age is vocal with social plaint, the cry of thwarted or postponed political aims. The masses of the leading European communities seem to be learning to ask whether the monstrous inequalities with respect to the material conditions of well-being are, after all, an eternal and immutable ordinance of Nature, though they have not yet arrived at the hopeful point of a distinct perception of the means of amelioration. On the other hand, the characteristic boast of our age, rapid material growth, tends to set up a coarse and limited ideal of life, which only makes the absence of loftier aims the more keenly felt by the more discerning order of minds. How can men who have had visions of universal equality and fraternity find consolation in the spectacle of a plethora of material prosperity confined to a mere handful in the crowd, and serving only to throw out into bolder relief the prevailing emptiness? Or how can any increase in the number of families with liveried servants, or in the number of champagne consumers, pacify men who have grown weary in their attempts to enthrone some large and beautiful ideal of life?

While there are these general features of the age which appear to favour modern pessimism, it is probable that certain special circumstances in German political and social life co-operate in sustaining the mood in that country.[2] It is

[1] Hence, perhaps, the supposition of a mystic bond between Wagnerism and Schopenhauerism.

[2] Dr. Waldstein has made a careful study of the physical, social, and political causes of pessimism in Germany. He dwells on such facts as the miserable bodily development secured by the public schools, the unwholesome follies of university life, the artificiality of social intercourse,

at least certain that pessimism has not yet gained so deep a hold on other European nations as it seems to have gained on Germany. What these special circumstances may be it would be hazardous to say. A foreigner who happens to have visited Germany during the last six years of her national unity, and had opportunities of getting at the feelings and convictions of the people, must doubtless have been struck by the amount of dissatisfaction which is apt to come to the surface. The bourgeoisie appear to have almost forgotten the glories of Sedan and Paris under the unremitting pressure of increased taxation, and the exactions of an arduous system of national militia. The working classes are largely tainted with socialism, yet they find themselves barely allowed to express their ideas in the shape of a purely economic doctrine, while the police surveillance of their papers and their meetings effectually prevents their attacking existing political institutions. To an outsider who has observed this half-smothered social disaffection, there naturally occurs the reflection that the pessimism of Germany has its half-hidden supports in these regions. Whether this be really the case, cannot yet be certainly determined.[1]

and so on. In many respects he corroborates the observations and generalisations of that clever but exceedingly inadequate book, 'German Home Life.'

[1] Quite recently, Karl Hillebrand, in a very amusing review of 'German Home Life,' in the 'National Zeitung,' speaks of the present condition of the Germans as a waking up to their backwardness with respect to the material luxuries of life, the elegances of social intercourse, &c. Hence 'the exaggerated, never-ending complaints which sound loud' in the Fatherland. This effect, he thinks, is due in part to the Franco-German war. 'Our soldiers—and our soldiers are the nation—have become acquainted with an older and richer material civilisation, and have returned with wishes and needs which powerfully remind one of the wishes and needs which the Roman legions once brought back from the

These influences seem largely to account for the temporary success of philosophic pessimism in Germany. If we hold that these circumstances are transitory, it must follow that so far as pessimism is an outgrowth from them it is doomed to be transitory too. When new practical ideals assert themselves, when science impresses the popular mind with its large and fruitful ideas, and when the social structure adapts itself to growing intelligence and capacity, one may reasonably anticipate at least a partial decadence of pessimism.

So far as to the social circumstances which seem to have favoured the rise of modern pessimism. If, however, we would fully understand the success of this movement of thought, we must take into account other circumstances as well. Thus, we must not neglect to include in our view the elements both in the mode of philosophising and in the form of presentation, which have helped to give the writings of the pessimists so high a place in popular literature.

Schopenhauer is now acknowledged to be a classic in the more popular philosophic literature of Germany. In the first place, the writer's philosophic thought is, as I have observed, concrete, and one might almost say mythic. Instead of the subtle intricacies of the Hegelian dialectic, we here have ontological processes which shape themselves to the imagination as visible material events. The fundamental substance Will is, in an eminent degree, an anthropomorphic construction. All its movements are essentially human. It is grateful to minds weary of plodding through

East.' The writer takes a favourable view of this prevailing discontent. 'The frankness with which bold voices are everywhere denouncing and scourging evils and abuses, even in regions in which we were accustomed to regard ourselves as unapproached, as our University system, and the pursuits of science, is an excellent sign.'

the abstruse conceptions of Kant or Hegel, to find themselves understanding the mystery of the universe by help of so thoroughly real and picturesque an image. There are always plenty of persons who desire a philosophic idea at a little intellectual cost, and Schopenhauer's system, with its anthropomorphic fancies and its mystic elements, admirably supplies the wants of these.

Again, Schopenhauer owes no little to his wide and ample familiarity with the facts of science. He has a quick eye for all the more striking, picturesque, and poetic aspects of the physical and moral worlds, and he is skilful in making the best use of his scientific knowledge. The combination of a mythological metaphysic with a wide scientific basis of interesting and impressive facts, must, it is evident, be eminently fitted to win the admiration of minds which desire a certain breadth of intellectual view, and yet are impatient of the slower and more rigorous methods of the older philosophies.

Lastly, Schopenhauer's success rests in no inconsiderable measure on the charms of his literary style. As I have remarked, he was a pessimist by nature, and his delineations of life's misery interest us much more as the spontaneous poetic utterance of a personal feeling, than as conclusions from metaphysical or scientific principles. It is this personal and literary side of his writings, connecting him with the numerous representatives of instinctive or unreasoned pessimism, which probably attracts most readers. As we read Schopenhauer, we are impressed by the force of personality which expresses itself now in grim humour, now in pathetic tenderness. And then this personal revelation is clothed in the most attractive language. For clearness, terseness, and picturesqueness of effect, Schopen-

hauer's style is admitted to be excellent; and in a country where the graces of literary form are so often neglected, one cannot wonder that a writer, so direct, so pointed, and so graphic, should gather about him a numerous audience.

Hartmann's philosophic manner and literary style, though far from possessing the merits of Schopenhauer's, have probably contributed no little in securing for him so large a following. His mode of philosophising may be characterised as eminently laic. A manner of theorising less like the closely logical and exhaustive method of Kant or of Hegel it would be difficult to imagine. The way in which he shirks every difficulty lying in his path while making such laborious attempts to seem systematic, has been sufficiently pointed out. He approaches the domain of the scientists and metaphysicians as Cromwell may have intruded on the Rump Parliament, with the air of one who intends to make short work with the slow awkward endeavours of the effete authorities. He brings to his task the freshness as well as the superficiality of a man of the world. Also he displays a certain Prussian and even Prusso-military promptness and directness of intellectual movement. He pooh-poohs all side issues, sees one objective towards which he must push on his attack, and after a manner attains it. Nothing can well be more entertaining to the serious philosophical student than to see this jaunty Junker forcing his way into the midst of the learned priests of philosophy, and showing them by a mere gesture how the great question which has puzzled them so long is to be solved. When, for example, he sums up the arguments for and against the existence of an independent world, as though it were a simple military problem, susceptible of a solution by the calculus of probabilities, and when he similarly demonstrates that the

chances are infinitely against any new ebullition of will on the part of the Unconscious after the grand act of universal renunciation of will, the effect on a severely trained philosophic mind is one of immeasurable hilarity. But then these very qualities are just such as to dazzle the popular mind, which is always predisposed to think that its own unaided common sense can explain everything, which admires pluck before everything else, and which enjoys its laugh as it sees the pedantic old professors outwitted by a smart layman.

Again, it is plain that Hartmann's love for the mysterious and the supernatural, which is traceable throughout his view of the physical and moral world, is well adapted to allure minds not trained to rigorous scientific reflection. The slow and painstaking mode of explaining events by natural processes and laws is, after all, apt to be wearisome to all but the few who have acquired a deep sentiment for truth and fact. Most men, too, are by nature superstitious, and even in our *soi-disant* scientific age, when, owing to the influence of the *Zeit-geist*, men cannot but pay some heed to the claims of science, people like to have their 'scientific' teaching mixed with a good proportion of fable and myth. There are plenty of phenomena not yet explained, and the region of the unknown still supplies a terrain for the anthropomorphic fancies with which men's propensities to wonder, awe, terror, and worship, have ever been wont to fill the obscurer parts of the universe. Hence Hartmann's writings are doubly grateful; they gratify to the fullest the love of the marvellous, and yet do so by flattering the fashionable taste for science. It is remarked by the anonymous author of the work already referred to, 'Das Unbewusste vom Standpunkt der Physiologie und Descendenztheorie,' that

Hartmann's attempt to reconstruct a quasi-divine Providence in natural events on a scientific basis is likely to prove a final temporary support for an expiring system of superstitious theology. However this be, it is certain that Hartmann is largely read for this semi-poetical semi-theogical element in his works.

Nothing can better show the characteristic practical skill of Hartmann than the selection of his principal name, 'the Unconscious.' With something of an American quickness of scent for what is in the air he recognises that in science the nature of unconscious nervous processes which seem to resemble conscious processes in all save this one feature, is the growing question of the hour. This idea, detached from that of the nervous movements which alone gives it its meaning, he proceeds with admirable practical insight to erect into a metaphysical principle. The Unconscious—sublime negation that seems to suggest vast cavernous regions of a dim spiritual life, and yet after every new inspection shows itself to be an impalpable inanity, a very nothing, or shall we say like the Germans an 'Unthing!'

Hartmann's literary style is all in keeping with his mode of philosophising. It is eminently direct, concrete, and dilettant. It rather rejoices in an over-plainness of speech, and is continually adopting words and phrases which have a true ring of the Berlin restaurant, the haunt of *das Militär*, and of the pages of the Kladderadatsch. Its similes are chosen for their force, rather than for their elegance. The whole effect on a cultivated reader is that of a slashing cavalier richly dight in scarlet and gold, taking somewhat awkward yet highly effective strides in heavy top-boots. Yet, though containing a trace of coarseness for a cultivated literary

taste, it is clear, and in a sense ornate, and is full of attraction for the general reading public. Philosophy made concrete by the application of everyday language, the interspersion of humorous allusions among the highest abstractions, such a combination is a certain bait for that class—very large in Germany—which desires to add an easy acquaintance with philosophy to its other literary attainments.[1]

Hartmann's writings lack the personal interest of Schopenhauer's works, and his pessimism, as I have already observed, bears no marks of having sprung from the writer's inmost emotional nature. And, further, Hartmann's account of human life, wants the literary charm which belongs to Schopenhauer's half touching, half rousing story. Yet for this very reason, perhaps, it is the better fitted to impress a reader as something scientific and exact. And this appearance of scientific method which runs through the whole of the 'Philosophy of the Unconscious,' is, I conceive, one of the most potent elements of its popularity.

Once more, in order to appreciate the success which pessimism has won in the literature of the day, we must consider its practical utility at this particular time. The success of a practical idea seems to point to a pre-existing need of this idea. Viewed as a reaction from the silly intemperate optimism of the last century, pessimism is not only respectable, but exceedingly commendable. It is at least a

[1] That Hartmann has produced his effect almost exclusively in literary as opposed to philosophic and scientific circles, may be seen by a comparison of the favourable criticisms collected under the heads, 'Philosophic, Theologic, and Literary Opinions,' which the publishers have recently sent out in announcing a new edition of Hartmann's work. The total absence of *scientific* judgments, and the cold and guarded tone of the recognition of the few philosophers, curiously contrast with the abundance and fervour of the notices drawn from political and literary journals.

courageous facing of awkward facts, even though in its turn it enormously magnifies these neglected phenomena. And as such it cannot but exert a bracing intellectual influence on our age. In its contempt of all make-believe happiness, in its fearless exposure of the hollowness of many of the most eagerly sought social amusements of the day, it takes sides, unwittingly perhaps, with all worthy reformatory satire, from the days of the writer of 'Ecclesiastes' to those of Mr. Carlyle. Moreover, as a corrective to an indolent and unworthy habit of over-estimating the blessings of civilisation and progress, to the complacent supposition that every wrong is being rapidly set right, whether we exert ourselves or not, and that the world is swiftly entering on the millennial stage, the more sober portion of modern pessimism is as valuable as it is opportune.

Divested of its pretentious scientific trappings, and reduced from the rank of an exact assertion to that of the exaggeration of a partial truth, modern pessimism has its dignified and its valuable aspects. To this, it may be added, that even in its extreme and illogical form, it cannot but fulfil a useful temporary purpose. As I have already remarked, the question raised by Schopenhauer and his followers goes to the very foundations of all practical science, of the principles of ethics, and the rules of correct living. The question has never been so definitely raised before. Starting from a basis of hedonism, Schopenhauer and his school attempt for the first time with a semblance of scientific method to prove the impossibility of human happiness. The futility of this attempt has, I hope, been amply demonstrated in the course of this examination. Yet erroneous assertions in philosophy and science are by no means wholly injurious in their results. All error, so far as it misleads,

must be baneful; but the fallacies of pessimism are probably too conspicuous to deceive a large proportion of readers. And in any case, even though it be an error, it has served to attract attention to one of the most momentous questions affecting our common human life, and so indirectly to further the processes of sound knowledge.

Finally, if we would fully understand the force and vitality of modern pessimism, we must include in our view its permanent elements of value. The consideration of these will fitly close our examination of the subject.

Although both optimism and pessimism alike fail to recommend themselves as exclusive ideas either to our feelings or to our convictions, they may, when regarded as exaggerated presentations of partial and fragmentary ideas, be seen to possess a real value.

Thus, for example, pessimism may still claim a rightful place in poetry, side by side with its rival. There is a permanent element of sadness in life, as the most joyous must admit. However much progress may hereafter do for mankind, there will always, probably, be enough of sorrow in our earthly lot to suggest the elegiac mood of the pessimist. Though these threnodes could never satisfy the human spirit alone, they have an exquisite value when found side by side with the optimist's jubilant pæans. So precious and sacred, indeed, do we feel the office of this minor music, that we are ready to say, 'Even if the world ever forgot its sorrow when lapped in a millennial bliss, the loss to poetry would be a fact worth recognising.' It is a true sense of the poetic worth of things which makes a living poet write—

> My yearnings fail
> To reach that high apocalyptic mount
> Which shows in bird's-eye view a perfect world,

Or enter warmly into other joys
Than those of faulty struggling human kind.
That strain upon my soul's too feeble wing
Ends in ignoble floundering: I fall
Into short-sighted pity for the men
Who living in those perfect future times,
Will not know half the dear imperfect things
That move my smiles and tears.

It is, however, when we consider optimism and pessimism on their practical side as functions of society, subserving some useful social end, that their permanent significance and value become apparent.[1] Society lives and thrives, provided the resultant of the numerous forces of belief composing public opinion and sentiment points approximately towards the region of practical truth. It does not much matter to society that A exaggerates this idea, B a second idea, and so on, provided the result reached by a collision of these intellectual activities is fairly correct. Applying this thought to the rival ideas here discussed, one may say that there is a place for each creed in the bundle of intellectual forces which makes up the practical thought of a people. Society might, no doubt, steer itself by help of some intermediate and more accurate doctrine of life-value; as a matter of fact, however, it manages to do so almost as well by aid of a combination of these extreme views.

A little reflection may, indeed, show us that the tendencies of optimism and pessimism are both deeply rooted in the needs of the social life. Social action requires at

[1] The reader will see that in this way of envisaging the subject we are treading in the footsteps of Lange. To this extent, then, I would allow that Lange takes a correct view of the relations of the opposing beliefs. I would only object to his regarding the doctrines exclusively on this their practical side, more especially when he attempts to give an adequate explanation of the origin of the beliefs.

once the elevation of an ideal end, and a critical investigation of actual means. The individual experience arises out of the two impulses to believe and seize, to question and weigh. The belief that some good exists, is the prime condition of all individual endeavour; yet this endeavour will be futile unless the reflective mind examines well the resources at the command of action. Similarly, wise and fruitful social effort involves hope and faith on the one side, and criticism on the other. We may even reason *à priori* that since human nature is what it is, the ends of society would necessitate the simultaneous genesis and growth of these two complementary activities.

Hence in all ages there have existed side by side the two functions of ideal propulsion and critical restraint, the ardent excitation of the spirit by the presentation of some worthy end, and the moderation of this ardour by the ruthless exposure of the obdurate facts of life. These functions naturally fall to different classes determined by peculiarities of natural temperament. Hence the appearance of one-sided and inexact individual views of life. Society, however, is not harmed by this juxtaposition of contraries. To her the two activities are equally essential.[1]

As in the past so in the future, so far as we can yet see, it looks as if both activities must continue to supplement and to balance one another. On the one hand, our moralists, our poets, and our preachers, must still raise noble ideals for united effort; still represent the world as

[1] Of course each of these may be developed in excess, to the injury of society; and as a matter of history we find that each has in turn been in the ascendant. Again, it is to be observed that each function is not always required in the same degree of energy. With the varying conditions, internal and external, of society, there arises a special need now of the one, now of the other.

a golden harvest calling for the human sickle. On the other hand, our critics and satirists will continue to do well in pointing out the illusions which beset us, the obstacles which lie between us and our aims, and even the unpalatable concomitants which are bound up with these ends themselves after they have been reached.

There seems much to augur that the future endeavours of civilised mankind will be more and more directed by a consciousness of the interests of the permanent race rather than of those of the existing generation. The ideal which will inspire social action is the lasting improvement of human life by social and other agencies. Here, too, there will be room for each of the opposing tendencies. The advance of the race is a theme which easily lends itself to a foolish over-confidence. We may only too readily imagine that civilisation is swiftly bearing mankind to a millennial bliss, and in the early enforcements of the new ideal an exaggeration of its value is, one may safely say, inevitable. Hence though the idea of progress will, I conceive, supply the prime motor influence to future human efforts, it will be for the safety and good of mankind that it should ever and again be reminded of the other side of the case; of the heaviness of the wheels of the advancing chariot, of the huge granite-blocks which lie in its road, and of the much arduous toil which must be cheerfully given by the best of the race before the object of the journey will be realised in fairer and balmier regions.

It seems well then that the encourager and the discourager of the human heart, the inspirer and the restrainer of human effort, should still ply their respective functions side by side. At the same time there will always be room

for a third party, for the man of philosophic mind with his larger and correcter vision, assigning to each function its right place, and preventing either order of worker from indecorously seeking to construct a perfect view of the whole out of his partial and fragmentary perception.

APPENDICES.

A.

MR. LEWES'S VIEW OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

MR. LEWES'S important work 'The Physical Basis of Mind' appeared as the present volume was passing through the press; otherwise I should certainly have availed myself of some of the writer's conclusions. The reference to this work given in the foot-note on page 193, was written after I had read no more of the volume than the chapter there referred to. After a careful perusal of the whole treatise I feel it is due to Mr. Lewes to say that his theory of consciousness differs in appearance at least very considerably from that propounded by myself. He recognises mental phenomena (feeling or sensibility) as lying to a large extent, if not altogether, outside the limits of the *personal* consciousness. Thus he accepts the idea of cerebral reflexes (unconscious cerebration) with which he supposes perception and volition to be associated, and attributes feeling and volition to the lower centres in the spinal column.

Into the worth of the evidence brought forward in support of these views, I cannot here enter. What concerns us is the question whether such processes are strictly and absolutely unconscious. So far as I understand Mr. Lewes, these actions in the normal organism do somehow affect the personal consciousness, though the feelings or perceptions are not distinctly recognised. In this case, then, they are not absolutely unconscious, but only relatively so. Even supposing, however, that they are wholly detached from the personal consciousness, a further question arises whether they belong to some inferior sub-personal consciousness. That the spinal centres, for example, have a detached consciousness of their own

is a supposition which is perfectly consistent with the view of consciousness taken in the present work. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Lewes does not discuss this question. It will thus be seen that Mr. Lewes's views, so far as they are clearly developed, do not necessarily involve what I conceive to be the essentially unpsychological and self-contradictory idea of unconscious mind.

In one other particular, however, Mr. Lewes does distinctly oppose the view of consciousness taken by me in this work. In his able discussion of the theory of animal automatism (problem III.) he argues that since feeling or sensibility is an invariable accompaniment of the action of nervous centres, it is more philosophical to regard the psychical and the physical event as two aspects of one reality, and consequently to view feeling as a co-efficient, and not, with Professor Huxley, as a collateral result, of nervous process. I will frankly confess that had I read this criticism of the theory of automatism before writing the present work I should probably have put the teaching of the automatists less dogmatically than I have done (p. 202). At the same time, I must say that Mr. Lewes's argument appears to me to be far from a demonstration of his conclusion.

Without attempting to deal with the whole of this argument, I will simply point out what I regard as its principal defects. First of all, the alleged uniform connection of feeling (sensibility) with the action of nervous centres is not, I conceive, sufficiently proved. One of the arguments relied on here is the analogy of the lower (reflex) actions with the admittedly conscious ones. Here the writer seems to forget that the apparent spontaneity and new adaptation of means to ends manifested by decapitated animals may be accounted for as the result of organic connections depending on previous conscious co-ordinations and successive adaptations. Thus the close analogy might be explained without postulating present feeling. The other argument used is the identity of structure of all nervous centres. This physiological argument assumes, it is plain, that a psychical event, feeling, is as much a function of a nervous centre as the secretion of bile is a function of the liver. This is a considerable assumption, seeing that feeling, unlike bile, is not reducible to the same common terms as the organ (matter and motion). Yet waiving this difficulty, one may ask why Mr. Lewes should stop at the nervous centres and not rather predicate feeling of all parts of the nervous organism, *e.g.*

a motor nerve severed from its centre from which he expressly excludes it. So much as to the alleged invariable connexion of feeling and central function. It may be so, but it is not yet fully proved; and this being so, it seems to me that the negative testimony of consciousness must be regarded as to some extent discrediting the supposition.

Let us now pass to the second stage of Mr. Lewes's argument. Even if feeling were found to be invariably conjoined with the action of central organs this would not amount to a scientific proof of the identity of the two. Mr. Lewes would, no doubt, say that his idea of identity is simply a hypothesis. Yet is it not an essentially unverifiable hypothesis, and very much akin to all metempirical attempts to transcend experience? And further, if material processes are ever, in any of their forms, identical with feeling, would it not be more consistent to follow Hartmann and predicate a mental side of all physical facts? I do not know whether Mr. Lewes would be ready to carry his monism to this length. Yet this seems to me to be the only form of monism which is thoroughly intelligible, and which, moreover, can lay claim to a philosophical *raison d'être*, namely, the supposed need of resolving the mystery of the genesis of consciousness.

The automatist theory is not, then, I imagine, finally disproved by Mr. Lewes's line of reasoning. So far as this theory asserts that the chain of bodily events is distinctly conceivable (by help of the doctrine of the conservation of energy), as a self-sufficient physical process, it seems to me to be unassailable. Moreover, the facts of approximately unconscious secondary-automatic actions show how much the organism can do without the immediate interposition of the mental element. At the same time I admit that the automatist goes beyond the evidence if he asserts that all the higher actions of the organism could just as well take place without consciousness. It must be remembered that in no case is precisely the same nervous action at one time conscious, and at another time unconscious. In secondary automatic actions, and in the marvellous feats executed by Dr. Mesmet's now celebrated soldier in his abnormal states, we have every reason to suppose that the sum-total of the nervous conditions and processes somehow differs from that which underlies similar actions when consciously performed. In all such blind mimetic actions consciousness is clearly an antecedent, even though a remote antecedent. Hence

the question still remains whether such actions could ever be performed without the previous intervention of consciousness. It seems to me that we must still accept the old mystery of the union of body and soul as an ultimate fact which we cannot interpret, just because we have no other kindred facts with which to classify it. Looked at in the light of physical events in general, the actions of organisms seem to be self-sufficient. Yet the invariable appearance of consciousness with certain conditions in a living nervous organism is a fact which remains unexplained, and automatism obviously has no means of explaining it.

To this extent, then, I adopt the theory of automatism—so far as it affirms the *à priori* conceivability of complex nervous actions as purely physical processes. Accordingly, I hold that in the absence of the testimony of our own consciousness, and of organic conditions which clearly resemble those of human consciousness, inference respecting the existence of feeling in the physical world is, from a strictly scientific point of view, not only not necessary, but exceedingly precarious.

B.

PHYSIOLOGY OF PLEASURE AND PAIN.

I HAVE not thought it worth while to enter into the question whether our maximum pains exceed our maximum pleasures. This point has not, so far as I am aware, been insisted on by the pessimists. It may be conceded that the worst conceivable combination of pains far surpasses the most delightful conceivable assemblage of pleasures. It would be hardly possible to name an intensity of enjoyment capable of neutralising a minute's bodily torture on the rack. It is this fact, probably, which has given rise to such sayings as that of Petrarch (*Mille piacer non vagliono un tormento*). Possibly, too, the concession of the English optimists of the last century, that our pains are in the main more intense than our pleasures, was deduced from this same circumstance.

The consequences of this fact, supposing it to be ascertained, are not very important. That our organism is susceptible of a

deeper and intenser amount of suffering than of enjoyment in a given time seems to be an alarming announcement, yet it is plain that it tells us little apart from the relative frequency of the causes of these maximum intensities of feeling. It by no means follows from this that our average pains surpass our average pleasures in intensity, and I think that this last proposition, though apparently admitted by certain optimists, is by no means true in the case of a healthy and fairly prosperous man or woman. Still, the point is worth considering in a complete survey of the question of pessimism. Let us see what light physiology throws on it.

In a work just published by Mr. Grant Allen, entitled 'Physiological Æsthetics,' pleasure is referred to the normal action of a well-recruited nerve, pain to the destruction (disruption or exhaustion) of sentient tissue. In this common physiological theory of pleasure and pain the author ingeniously seeks an explanation of the fact that our maximum pains exceed our maximum pleasures. 'Massive pleasure can seldom or never attain the intensity of massive pain, because the organism can be brought down to almost any point of innutrition or exhaustion; but its efficient working cannot be raised very high above the average. Similarly, any special organ or plexus of nerves can undergo any amount of violent disruption or wasting away, giving rise to extremely acute pains; but organs are very seldom so highly nurtured and so long deprived of their appropriate stimulant as to give rise to very acute pleasure' (pp. 25, 26).

There seems to be considerable force in these observations. On a first view of the matter it looks as if the destruction of a tissue is unlimited, whereas the pleasurable normal action of a nerve is obviously limited by the store of energy at its disposal. Yet it seems to me that Mr. Allen presses the point too far. The painful wearing away of a single nerve is limited by the fact of total exhaustion, which, as I have remarked, is accompanied with insensibility. This effect may be produced instantaneously by a destructively violent stimulation, or after protracted stimulation. It is true that this stage of total exhaustion is rarely reached, and that painful stimulation of great force may go on for long intervals; yet it clearly presents a limit. If, instead of a small area of nerve, we take a large tract, the limit becomes still more distinct. The supposition of the whole nervous system being

racked with immeasurable torture for a single minute seems to be plainly opposed to the laws of life. Such a concurrence of violent stimulations would clearly destroy the organism. So, too, protracted intense pain in all sentient elements is biologically inconceivable. The facts of disease show plainly enough that such an amount of destructive action vastly reduces the capacity for suffering. Indeed, the very fact that pain is *destructive*, suggests on a deeper reflection that the sum of human torment, both for any particular interval, and absolutely, is a limited quantity.

Another point connected with the differences of pleasure and pain on which physiology might seem to throw light is the recollection of pleasure and pain. I have assumed in this work that where there is no special sensibility to pleasure or to pain, pleasures and pains are recalled with equal facility and in equal distinctness. Dr. Maudsley, in his recent volume 'The Physiology of Mind' (pp. 537, 538), speaks of a special obstacle to the recollection of pain, and thus appears to argue that pains are less easily recalled than pleasures. This obstacle lies in the fact that pains imply 'a disorganisation or disturbance of nerve element.' The reasoning is ingenious, and offers a tempting rejoinder to some of the arguments of Hartmann in favour of the predominance of pain. Does it, however, answer to the facts? Do we experience any greater difficulty in recalling a bodily pain, as that of sea-sickness, than a bodily pleasure, as that of a choice dish? The fact seems to be that the lower organic pains and pleasures are equally irrecoverable in idea, whereas the 'mental pains'—for example, those of defeated ambition—are just as well remembered as mental pleasures. What determines the recoverability of a feeling is not its painful or pleasurable character, but its intellectual aspects and surroundings. Dr. Maudsley plainly recognises this in the passage from which I have just quoted. I would just add that in the case of a thoroughly healthy organism there appears to be, independently of volition, a special disposition to pleasure, and in this case, it is clear, pleasures will more readily survive in memory than pains.

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